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# **NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL**

**MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA**

## **THESIS**

**PALESTINIAN REFUGEES IN THE LEVANT:  
ALTERNATE THEORIES FOR DISPARITY IN  
TREATMENT**

by

Stephanie L. Krueger

June 2011

Thesis Advisor:  
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**PALESTINIAN REFUGEES IN THE LEVANT: ALTERNATE THEORIES FOR  
DISPARITY IN TREATMENT**

Stephanie L. Krueger  
Lieutenant, United States Navy  
B.A., Naval Postgraduate School, 2011

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

**MASTER OF ARTS IN SECURITY STUDIES  
(MIDDLE EAST, SOUTHEAST ASIA AND SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA)**

from the

**NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL  
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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis presents an analysis of factors contributing to the disparity in treatment of the Palestinian refugees in the Levant. Each case study presents a basic overview of the historical background for the Palestinian refugee migration to the state before highlighting seven factors affecting the Palestinians. The factors of legal framework, economics, politics, space within the state, relationship of the PLO, Islamists, and Palestinians, and identity are evaluated to determine their relevance for the state's treatment of the Palestinians in the Levant. Two factors emerged as the main influencers for treatment of the Palestinians. The research shows that each nation's economic situations drove the level of integration into the state. The research shows that Jordan needs the Palestinians refugees' economic provision to support their rentier economy. Syria has absorbed the Palestinians into their economy, but was not willing to afford the refugees the same rights as their citizens. Lebanon does not seek to disrupt its confessional balance through integration of the Palestinians economically. Economics also affects the second factor, the politics surrounding the Palestinians. All three cases demonstrated a willingness integrate the Palestinians only to a level that would maintain political power for the ruling party. Lebanon again uses confessional politics to justify its lack of integration. The Syrian Alawi elite seeks to maintain their political monopoly pacifying the Palestinians enough to prevent action. Jordan's authoritarian regime also seeks to maintain its political power. They seek to minimize Palestinian political action through repressive measure that ensure the authoritarian regime's survival. While all the factors bore some relevance to the treatment of the Palestinians, economics and politics emerged as the principal factors affecting the treatment of the Palestinians in the Levant.



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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>DFLP</b>	Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine
<b>GAPAR</b>	General Authority for Palestine Arab Refugees
<b>GUPW</b>	General Union of Palestinian Workers
<b>GUPWom</b>	General Union of Palestinian Women
<b>IAF</b>	Islamic Action Front
<b>IMF</b>	International Monetary Fund
<b>MEFTA</b>	Middle East Free Trade Area
<b>MEPI</b>	Middle East Partnership Initiative
<b>PARI</b>	Palestine Arab Refugee Institute or Institution
<b>PCP</b>	Palestinian Communist Party
<b>PFLP</b>	Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine
<b>PNC</b>	Palestinian National Convention
<b>PLO</b>	Palestinian Liberation Organization
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations Humanitarian Council on Refugees
<b>UNRWA</b>	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East
<b>WEF</b>	World Economic Forum
<b>WTA</b>	World Trade Organization

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# **I. PALESTINIAN REFUGEES IN THE LEVANT: ALTERNATE THEORIES FOR DISPARITY IN TREATMENT**

## **A. MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTION**

The 1948 conflict ensuring the creation of the State of Israel also created a significant Palestinian refugee crisis that exists to present day without a “just” solution. Compounding the already difficult Palestinian refugee situation, the Arab defeat in the 1967 Arab-Israeli Conflict further complicated the refugee situation. The adoption of UN Resolution 242 on November 9, 1967, signaled the end to that conflict; however, the phraseology of the resolution and the reluctance for all sides to adopt the resolution has had a lasting impact on the Palestinian refugee situation. In the wording of Resolution 242, the drafters took UN Resolution 194 as a reference in the drafting of the text. While Resolution 242 does not specify the precise solution for the refugee situation, Resolution 194 adopted by the UN on December 11, 1948, clearly presents the UN’s position on the refugees when it states that the UN, “Resolves that the refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for loss of or damage to property which, under principles of international law or in equity, should be made good by the Governments or authorities responsible.”<sup>1</sup>

Despite this resolution in 1948, the Palestinian refugee crisis continues to present day. While refugee populations exist throughout the Middle East, not all refugees enjoy the same basic rights and freedoms. This study investigates alternative theories for why the Palestinian refugees are treated differently among host states in the Levant. The study examines variables present in each state such as its legal framework, economic structure, space available, political situation including that of Islamist organizations, and the impact of identity. The study considers the Palestinians refugees’ affect on their

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<sup>1</sup> UN General Assembly, Third Session, Resolution 194 (III), para. 11, *Palestine: Progress Report of the UN Mediator*, <http://daccess-ddsny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/043/65/IMG/NR004365.pdf?OpenElement> (accessed August 25, 2010).

treatment within the states based on their willingness to assimilate, political and religious activities, and violent actions towards the host states. All examination of Palestinian behavior was examined through the lens of the factors presented.

## **B. IMPORTANCE**

Much research has been done on emergence of a Palestinian identity and the Palestinians' ongoing quest for a sovereign homeland. Significant scholarly works are dedicated to the general history of the Palestinian people and the history of their refugee crisis. This thesis studies the variables that factor into the treatment of Palestinian refugees in the Levant. The study analyzes the variables that factor into the level of integration the host state allows for the Palestinians. This research adds to the prevalent works on discrimination and maltreatment of a weaker people group.

The principal element of the study is a review of the factors that influence the treatment of the Palestinians. The study primarily looks at the behavior of the states that host the Palestinian refugees. In conducting this analysis, a look at the Palestinians' role in the integration cannot be ignored. The study looks at the role the Palestinian refugees themselves have in their integration into their host states. Do the Palestinians want to integrate into the host states? How does their political activity play into the amalgamation of the refugee population? What role do violent acts committed by the Palestinians or on their behalf have on the integration of them into the host states? Has the Palestinian leadership's reluctance to retreat from *right of return* contributed to their treatment by the host states?

## **C. PROBLEMS AND HYPOTHESES**

Numerous factors are evaluated to determine the reason for the varying treatment of Palestinian refugees by their host states. A foundational basis of what initially created the Palestinian refugee crisis begins the discussion. A general background on the United Nations resolutions that have been established concerning the Palestinian refugee crisis

sets a baseline to begin an analysis of the legal framework. The background information facilitates the study of the variables that impact the treatment of the Palestinians in the Levant.

The treatment of the refugee populations differs greatly among the three states examined. The method of integration of the Palestinians in each case is not the same in each case. The application of key variables for lack of integration of the refugee population varies slightly for each state. The different political environments and governmental structure within each nation affects the treatment of refugees. The dramatically different population make-ups influence each situation. The complications of Sunni versus Shiite Muslims, Christian populations, and various other smaller people groups make the three nations noticeably diverse, which bears impact on the treatment of the Palestinian refugees. Moreover, the three nations have dissimilar sized refugee populations with Jordan having over 1.9 million refugees as of January 2010 while Syria and Lebanon each have just over 400 thousand refugees each.<sup>2</sup> Central to this line of research is the legal framework the refugee population lives under in each country. The three countries that examined all vary in their levels of acceptance of the UN Resolutions and agreements such as the Casablanca Protocol by the Arab League.

The outside influence each country accepts in reference to the refugee population bears on the refugee situation. The influence of the Palestinian nationalist and Islamist organizations affects the refugee populations differently as well. The influence of Iran factors into the political realm of the states in varying ways. The path each state has taken in regard to peace with Israel differentiates between states. The role of peace negotiations influences the economic and political factors for all three cases.

The impact of the Palestinian right-of-return offers another complex factor for examination in relationship to the treatment of the Palestinians. While UN Resolution 194, “Resolves that the refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so,” it also mentions compensation for those

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<sup>2</sup> UN World Refugee Agency. UNRWA in Figures: As of 1 January 2010. <http://www.unrwa.org/userfiles/20100628261.pdf> (accessed September 3, 2010).



refugees that do not want to return.<sup>3</sup> The Palestinian refugee population's unifying policy of right of return complicates the host nations' positions for their treatment of Palestinian refugees, since the argument that if the refugees are given more rights by the host state then that would dilute the necessity of right of return.<sup>4</sup> The right of return bears heavily on the factor of identity for the Palestinian refugees.

The long list of potential factors that affect the treatment of Palestinian refugees in the Levant can potentially explain why the host nations treat their refugee populations the way they do. The research concludes that all the factors bear some relevance to the treatment of the refugee populations. However, two factors emerge as the central reasons for the treatment of the Palestinian refugees. The research shows that each nation's economic situations stand as a principal factor determining the integration of the Palestinian refugees into its host nations' populations. The research shows that Jordan needs the Palestinians refugees and the income that they bring to support their rentier economy. Syria also has absorbed the Palestinians into their economy. Despite the integration into their economy, Syria was unwilling to fully integrate the Palestinians as citizens. The research shows that Lebanon's economy does not support the economic integration of their Palestinian refugee population. All three states seek to remain economically viable in the region. Their quest to remain economically viable stems from their desire to remain politically viable in the region. Each state seeks to have political clout in the region. The governments of all three cases need to be economically sound in order to remain in political power. The level of integration of the Palestinians in the economy varies based on the Palestinians economic and political resourcefulness to the state. The political factor emerges as the other principal factor influencing the treatment of the Palestinians in the Levant. Lebanon seeks to maintain its confessional balance. In order to maintain the current political make-up, the Maronite faction in government does not want the Palestinians to integrate and form an alliance with the Sunni or Shi'a factions in government. Some moves have been made by the Shi'a Hezbollah to call for

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<sup>3</sup> UN General Assembly, Resolution 194 (III), para. 11.

<sup>4</sup> Rex Brynen, "Imagining a Solution: Final Status Arrangements and Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon," *Journal of Palestinian Studies* 26:2 (Winter 1997), 49.

further Palestinian integration. However, the already divided nature of Lebanese politics has facilitated few legal rights being granted to the Palestinians. The political elite in Lebanon seeks to maintain the confessional balance that has been preserved for decades in Lebanon. In Syria, the Alawi regime favors granting the Palestinians enough rights to maintain the political inactivity. The Alawi represent a population minority that has political power. The Ba'ath party that the Alawi control supports the general Palestinian cause not out of a real concern for the Palestinians. Instead, the authoritarian regime of Syria hopes to prevent any claims on their political power. The state does not want the Palestinians uniting with the Sunni majority to challenge the regime's power. The Jordanian political system allows for some Palestinian integration. However, the integration of the Palestinians is not enough to facilitate a challenge to the authoritarian monarchy. The state seeks to maintain its political support through marginalizing the potential of Palestinian control in parliament. No real political freedom is given to the Palestinians that could threaten the authoritarian regime. The monarchy of Jordan has shown some support for the Palestinians without subscribing to the greater Arab nationalist cause. Overall, all three cases exhibit political factors that affect the treatment of the Palestinians.

#### **D. LITERATURE REVIEW**

After the proclamation by the UN General Assembly on November 29, 1947, calling for the partition of Palestine into two states, violence in Palestine escalated. Concerns circulated throughout the area that a Jewish state would emerge and Arab armies would come to Palestine to prevent that from happening. Revisionist historian Benny Morris discusses how this led to the beginning of the Palestinian population exodus from Palestine with an estimated 75,000 Palestinian Arabs leaving between February and March 1948.<sup>5</sup> Post-1948 war, the new Jewish State took on a policy of leveling abandoned Palestinian villages and fields and starting Jewish settlements in their

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<sup>5</sup> Benny Morris, *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem, 1947–1949*, Cambridge, Great Britain: University Press, 1989, 29–30.

place making the probability of Palestinian return difficult and unlikely.<sup>6</sup> Adding to the drama of the situation was the defeated Arab states reluctance to absorb the Palestinian population within their own populations. The reluctance is seen through demands for the UN or United States to get Israel to agree to repatriation for the refugees.<sup>7</sup> Ultimately, approximately 700,000 Palestinians became refugees as a result of the 1948 war.<sup>8</sup> This led to UN Resolution 194 issuing the call for refugees to allow refugees to return to the land now occupied by Israel.<sup>9</sup>

While much occurred between 1948 and 1967, the Arab-Israeli Conflict of 1967 was a watershed event in the relations between Israel, the Arab states, and the Palestinians. With the ongoing euphoria of Arab nationalism led by Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser, the possibility of war with Israel was initially seen as a way to restore Arab honor after the defeat of 1948 and potentially lead to the establishment of the Palestinian State.<sup>10</sup> Jordan and Israel attempted to negotiate for peace prior to the 1967 conflict to no avail. The conflict, however, was not prevented and resulted in an exasperation of the already prevalent Palestinian refugee crisis. Ultimately, the end of the 1967 war rocketed Israel to great esteem in the Western world, while the Arab states colossal defeat did nothing to bolster options of the state of the Arab world.<sup>11</sup> In *The Arabs: A History*, Eugene Rogan argues that the thrashing received by the Arab armies in 1967 led to significant changes in the politics of the region. No longer was Nasser seen as the great leader of the Arab cause, and the US began to have a greater role in the politics of the region.<sup>12</sup> Even more significant a result of the war was the territories now

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<sup>6</sup> Benny Morris, *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem, 1947–1949*, 155.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 255.

<sup>8</sup> Richard Bocco, "UNWRA and the Palestinian Refugees: A History within a History," *Refugee Survey Quarterly* 28: 2–3: 229–252. <http://www.unrwa.org/userfiles/201006109359.pdf> (accessed September 3, 2010).

<sup>9</sup> UN General Assembly. Third Session, Resolution 194 (III), para. 11. *Palestine: Progress Report of the UN Mediator*. <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/043/65/IMG/NR004365.pdf?OpenElement> (accessed August 25, 2010).

<sup>10</sup> Eugene Rogan, *The Arabs: A History*, New York, Basic Books, 2009, 334.

<sup>11</sup> Benny Morris, *Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict, 1881–2001*, New York: Vintage Books, 2001, 329.

<sup>12</sup> Rogan, *The Arabs: A History*, 341.

claimed by Israel. The Golan Heights, Sinai Peninsula, Gaza Strip, and the West Bank to include East Jerusalem were now claimed by Israel.<sup>13</sup> The Arab countries had experienced defeat. The Palestinian refugee situation proved even more burdensome for the states.

The passing of UN Resolution 242 significantly affected the Palestinian refugee situation. While the resolution passed on October 25, 1967, by the UN Security Council was fairly specific in calling for Israel to return the lands captured in the recent conflict, the wording on the refugee issue remained vague. The resolution calls, “For achieving a just settlement of the refugee problem.”<sup>14</sup> John Quigley contends that by using the wording “just settlement” the resolution opens itself up for varied interpretation. So, the debate rages between Israel and other interested parties in whether the intent of the resolution is met with repatriation or settlement in other areas.<sup>15</sup> Rashid Khalidi states in the updated introduction to his book, *Palestinian Identity* that the Arab states’ “ambivalent and often hostile attitude” towards the idea of a Palestinian state and to the refugees they host on their own lands has a significant impact on the Palestinians identity.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, the disagreement over the “right of return” that grew after the 1967 conflict remains central to negotiations by the Israelis, Palestinians, and Arab states today and leads to debates among the Arab states on the rights that should be given to refugees that they host. Finally, the negative actions of Palestinian leaders or offshoot terrorist groups often translated into restrictions placed on the Palestinians or expulsion by the host Arab states.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Morris, *Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict*, 331.

<sup>14</sup> UN Security Council, Resolution 242 (1967). The Situation in the Middle East, <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/240/94/IMG/NR024094.pdf?OpenElement> (accessed August 25, 2010).

<sup>15</sup> John Quigley, “Security Council Resolution 242 and the Right of Repatriation,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 37:1 (Autumn 2007), 49.

<sup>16</sup> Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2010, XXVI.

<sup>17</sup> Susan M. Akram, “Palestinian Refugees and Their Legal Status: Rights, Politics and Implications for a Just Solution,” *Journal of Palestinian Studies* 31:3 (Spring 2002), 44.

Of the Levant nations, Lebanon may offer the most straightforward example on how domestic politics have affected the plight of the refugees within the country. While Lebanon did not lose land during the 1967 war, the overall Arab states' sentiment against Israel increased after the conflict. Are Knudsen makes the case that with all the legal processes involved in the treatment of the Palestinians the Arab states have been, "subservient to the host countries' and governments' foreign policy agendas and, in Lebanon especially, placed the judiciary and legislative under executive patronage."<sup>18</sup> Unlike Jordan, Lebanon did not support UN Resolution 242.<sup>19</sup> This move may not have been completely unexpected due to Lebanon's reluctance in 1965 to accept the Arab League's Protocol for the Treatment of Palestinians', also known as the Casablanca Protocol. The reservations they placed on their signing of the protocol demonstrate the government's position towards the refugees. Their exceptions to the protocol included conditions on the potential for restrictions on Palestinian employment and mobility to and from Lebanon.<sup>20</sup> Much scholarly work has been devoted to the widespread poverty within the refugee camps within Lebanon, which of the countries hosting the Palestinian refugees has the most refugees living in poverty.<sup>21</sup> An Amnesty International report on the Palestinian refugees within Lebanon offers the insight that of the over 400,000 refugees registered in Lebanon they still are unable to own property or work and live in filthy conditions within the 12 official refugee camps. They cite that at least three thousand of the refugees do not have identification cards, which are needed for basic functions within society. This lack of identification cards is due to conflicts between the Lebanese government and Palestinian leadership expelled during the Lebanese Civil War.<sup>22</sup> Another instance cited in numerous works on the treatment of refugees within Lebanon is the destruction of the Nahr al-Bared refugee camp that led to 21,650 refugees

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<sup>18</sup> Are Knudsen, "Widening the Protection Gap: The 'Politics of Citizenship' for Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon, 1948-2008," *Journal of Refugee Studies* 22:1 (September 2009), 52.

<sup>19</sup> Rogan, *The Arabs: A History*, 342.

<sup>20</sup> League of Arab States, *Protocol for the Treatment of Palestinians in Arab States: "Casablanca Protocol,"* September 11, 1965. <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/460a2b252.html> (accessed August 26, 2010), 1-2.

<sup>21</sup> Knudsen, "Widening the Protection Gap," 51.

<sup>22</sup> Amnesty International, *Amnesty International Report 2010-Lebanon*, 28 May 2010, <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4c03a81a2d.html> (accessed August 26, 2010), 1.

fleeing during the 15-week battle between the Lebanese Army and Fatah al-Islam in 2007. Despite the time elapsed since the conflict, the camp remains destroyed, and the refugees remain without an authorized place to reside. The camp remains demolished without firm plans for reconstruction.<sup>23</sup> The fact that the refugee camp will not be rebuilt is commonly accepted within Lebanon.

The debate on the position of refugees within the Lebanese society is often linked to right of return. Rex Brynen discusses how the question continues to be raised within Lebanon on how can Palestinians work for right of return and then at the same time, work for rights within Lebanon? He cites a survey that among Lebanese citizen that approximately one-third feel the resettlement of Palestinians within Lebanon would have “damaging political or economic consequences.”<sup>24</sup> Rosemary Sayigh offers similar sentiment by stating that the opposition towards Palestinian resettlement within Lebanon is one of the few domestic issues the Lebanese government and public agree upon.<sup>25</sup>

Some movement towards rights for the refugees has been made with the August 2010 Lebanese Parliamentary amendment that would allow the Palestinian refugees to receive work permits and benefits with the Lebanese Social Security.<sup>26</sup> However, even if this law were put into affect work permits would still need to be obtained by the Palestinian refugees. Previous revision to the labor laws saw few employers willing to assist in the obtaining of work permits, so an education of the changes in law would need to be conducted for Lebanese businesses. In addition, professions dominated by membership organizations like law, medicine and engineering remain on the list of

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<sup>23</sup> Amnesty International, *Amnesty International Report 2010-Lebanon*, 1.

<sup>24</sup> Brynen, “Imagining a Solution,” 48, 53.

<sup>25</sup> Rosemary Sayigh, “Palestinians in Lebanon: Harsh Present, Uncertain Future,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 25:1 (Autumn 1995), 37.

<sup>26</sup> UN News Service. *UN Welcomes Advance Enabling Palestinian Refugees to work in Lebanon*, August 19, 2010. <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4c739of2.html> (accessed August 26, 2010), 1.

banned professions for the Palestinians.<sup>27</sup> Despite potential gains in rights for the Palestinians these rights do not include the same rights reserved for refugees in other states.

Like the other Arab states, Syria also experienced defeat in the 1967 war against Israel. The loss of the Golan Heights to Israel has affected international and domestic politics within Syria since the war. Syria's position in the immediate aftermath of the war was not one of negotiation with Israel. This led to their unwillingness to accept UN Resolution 242.<sup>28</sup> Despite numerous attempts Israel and Syria have been unable to make peace.

Syria offers many basic rights to the Palestinian refugees they host. Despite this they have not given the Palestinians the right of citizenship. Some have argued this has been done in order to preserve the Palestinians' identity, necessary for their nationalistic movement. Laurie Brand notes that the relatively stable economic situation in Syria allowed the Palestinian population to be integrated into society and even move out of the refugee camps.<sup>29</sup> Some of the basic services that the refugees within Syria expected began to be restricted when an influx of refugees from Lebanon migrated in the 1980s.<sup>30</sup> Of note in recent years has been the influx of Palestinian refugees, displaced from Iraq, that have entered Syria. The Brookings Institute reports that of most of the refugees fleeing from Iraq were never registered with the UN. Despite the Syrian government's initial agreement to their entrance into the country, the situation changed in 2006. Eventually, the Syrian government did allow the refugees to begin entering again and settling in camps in Syria. Yet with the attempt by more Iraqi Palestinian refugees to enter Syria, came blocking maneuvers again by the Syrians. Complicating the situation is the poverty in which these refugees currently reside within Syria. This differs from the

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<sup>27</sup> Human Rights Watch. *Lebanon: Seize Opportunity to End Discrimination Against Palestinians*, June 18, 2010, <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4c2073b9c.html> (accessed August 26, 2010), 1.

<sup>28</sup> Rogan, *The Arabs: A History*, 342.

<sup>29</sup> Brand, "Palestinians in Syria: The Politics of Integration," 622.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 635.

relatively peaceful existence they had experienced under Saddam Hussein's regime.<sup>31</sup> Brand notes the importance of Palestinian-appointed arbitrator the PLO as a factor in the treatment of the refugees in Syria.<sup>32</sup> The PLO's precarious relationship with the state affected the state's willingness to integrate the Palestinians. The poor relationship, in part, led to a deterioration of treatment towards Palestinian refugees in relation to the political climate of Syria. The integration of the Palestinians economically and politically stem from the political elite's goal of preventing a change in political power. The state seeks to maintain the current authoritarian nature of government. In order to facilitate this, the state allows the Palestinians enough rights to prevent their political action against the state.

Jordan claimed the West Bank after the 1948 conflict. The West Bank remained under Jordanian control until Israel laid claim in 1967. Palestinians participated in Jordanian society in both the East and West Bank, and enjoyed the rights of citizenship offered by the monarchy.<sup>33</sup> However, the results of the 1967 war had an immediate impact on the treatment of Palestinian refugees in Jordan. With Israel allowing some people displaced by the 1967 conflict to return to Israel, the Jordanians riled the already contentious situation by not allowing refugees to obtain forms with Israel's seal.<sup>34</sup> Brand comments that around this time, or perhaps even sooner, the idea of a Jordanian identity and history became almost synonymous with that of the Palestinians. The idea that the Jordanian identity now was in some minds not separate from that of the refugee Palestinian population irritated some Jordanians. This discontent over the intermingling of identities contributes in part to the treatment of the Palestinians and specifically the refugees within Jordan.<sup>35</sup> In 1988, King Hussein declared Jordan's relinquishment of its claim to the West Bank. As a result of this renunciation, Palestinians in the West Bank

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<sup>31</sup> Ashraf al-Khalidi, Sophia Hoffman, and Victor Tanner, "Iraqi Refugees in the Syrian Arab Republic: A Field Based Snapshot." Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institute, June 2007, 20–21.

<sup>32</sup> Brand, "Palestinians in Syria: The Politics of Integration," 621.

<sup>33</sup> Laurie A. Brand, "Palestinians and Jordanians: A Crisis of Identity," *Journal of Palestinian Studies* 24:4 (Summer 1995), 47.

<sup>34</sup> Segev, "The June 1967 War and the Palestinian Refugee Problem," 18–19.

<sup>35</sup> Brand, "Palestinians and Jordanians: A Crisis of Identity," 48.



began to see withdrawals of their Jordanian citizenship.<sup>36</sup> As time elapsed tension increased between the Jordanian and Palestinian populations in Jordan, particularly after the Gulf War. The Palestinian Leadership Organization (PLO) had supported Iraq while the Jordanians attempted to remain neutral. Jordan emerged from the war in the midst of an economic crisis that was further exasperated by a flood of Palestinian refugees expelled from Kuwait. Leading to the reemergence of the “East Bank first” policy, first seen after Black September.<sup>37</sup>

Jordan’s relationship with its refugee population has remained the more harmonious of than that of the host nations. Despite issue with the PLO’s operation within Jordan, culminating in violence, the kingdom continued to allow refugee migration into Jordan and maintained support for the Islamic holy places in Jerusalem. This also included the salaries of some government positions in the West Bank.<sup>38</sup> Jordan grants Palestinians citizenship, health services, education, and employment opportunities. The massive number of refugees coupled with Jordan’s own economic problems have led to tension between the two communities. Another analyst states that the moves towards political liberalization may really not be to improve the economy in Jordan or relations between the Palestinians and Jordanians, but instead that the actions of the government are an attempt to maintain monarchical power versus political and economic change.<sup>39</sup>

Currently, many within Jordan are concerned that not only will the current refugees in Jordan remain, but also the refugees within Syria and Lebanon will be sent to Jordan in a final peace settlement.<sup>40</sup> This fear is fed by Israel’s assertion that “Jordan is Palestine.” Furthermore, concerns have arisen by human rights groups over withdrawal of citizenship to Palestinians within Jordan over the last few years.<sup>41</sup> While Jordan has

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<sup>36</sup> Human Rights Watch, *Jordan: Stop Withdrawing Nationality From Palestinian-Origin Citizens*, February 1, 2010, <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4b6aba291c.html> (accessed August 26, 2010), 1.

<sup>37</sup> Brand, “Palestinians and Jordanians: A Crisis of Identity,” 55–56.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

<sup>39</sup> Glenn E. Robinson, “Defensive Democratization in Jordan,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 30:3 (August, 1998), 387.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

<sup>41</sup> Human Rights Watch, *Jordan: Stop Withdrawing Nationality From Palestinian-Origin Citizens*, 1.

adapted to the results of the 1967 war by relinquishing claims of sovereignty of the West Bank the ongoing politicization of the peace process and Jordan's wish to remain a partner in broker the final settlement has influenced the treatment of Palestinians within the Jordan.

## **E. METHODS AND SOURCES**

A comparative case study on the treatment of refugees was conducted looking specifically at the Levant nations as hosts to Palestinian refugees. The study examined each case to discover patterns in the treatment of refugees. In finding the patterns in each case study, the patterns served as supporting evidence to answer the research question presented. The thesis used a qualitative method to discover an understanding of how the cases relate to one another, and ultimately how the cases support the hypothesis. In doing this type of research, the potential for incompatible propositions arose and was handled. Overall, the use of the comparative case study method enabled a blueprint for behavior to be followed for establishing the principal factors impacting the Palestinian refugees' treatment in the Levant.

A comprehensive look at the variables that affect the treatment of refugees in each nation was conducted. In looking at each host nation, the topics of citizenship, voting, property rights, education, and living conditions was examined in regard to the variables in refugee treatment. In developing this area of research, facts from the UN Relief and Works Agency for the Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA), Amnesty International, and other relevant humanitarian and legal organizations were used to establish a baseline. Since the international community has many sources of aid to the Palestinians, UN resolutions, UNRWA documents, and Arab League agreements serve as the foundational primary source material in this research. Legal and governmental documents on the rights and privileges given to the Palestinian refugees were also used to set up the legal framework. Personal accounts of the conditions for refugees in the Levant specifically in refugee camps given via printed narrative were scrutinized to understand the conditions the refugees reside. Rosemary Sayigh, Laurie Brand, and reports by Fafo gave a detailed look at the Palestinian refugee situation in the Levant.

## **F. THESIS OVERVIEW**

The thesis begins with a brief historical overview of the events that precipitated the start of the Palestinian refugee crisis to include the results of the 1948 War and the establishment of UN Resolution 194. The introduction offers an overview of the results of the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, the distribution of refugees post-1967, and the crafting of UN Resolution 242. The next three chapters look independently at the refugee situation in Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan. The three chapters develop how the legal framework, economic structure, space within the state, political actions, camp security, relationship of the PLO and Islamist organizations, and identity factor into the treatment of Palestinian refugees in the Levant. The chapters examine the refugee population's role in integration into the states via their economic and political activities, and violence conducted by them or on their behalf in reference to its impact on their treatment by their hosts. The thesis offers a synopsis of the significance of the research presented and note on potential for follow-on research.

## II. PALESTINIAN REFUGEES LEBANON: ALTERNATE THEORIES FOR DISPARITY IN TREATMENT

Due to the 1948 Arab–Israeli war, approximately 100,000 Palestinian refugees fled into Lebanon. As of January 1, 2010, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) cite 425,640 registered refugees within Lebanon.<sup>42</sup> However, despite growth in the refugee population, factions of the Lebanese population continue to contest the rights that should be afforded the Palestinian refugees and whether the refugees should truly be integrated into Lebanese society. The question of permanently accepting the Palestinian refugee population as citizens of Lebanon continues to ignite debate. Fears mount around naturalization for the primarily Sunni refugees due to its potential for disruption of the confessional balance of Lebanon.<sup>43</sup> With deep sectarian divides in the country, one of the only issues that appear to unite all sects is that of opposing permanent settlement of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.<sup>44</sup>

In order to delineate the factors that influence the disparity in treatment of Palestinian refugees throughout the Levant, this chapter analyzes the factors that impact the treatment of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. The chapter begins with an analysis of the legal statutes relating to the Palestinians. A summary of the status of civic rights currently offered to the Palestinian refugees relates to the Palestinians legal status. The economic situation is considered next. The educational system and job availability in Lebanon offer important insight into the economic impact of the refugees to the host economy. The chapter examines how the space within Lebanon—specifically the refugee camps—factor into the treatment of the Palestinian refugees. The chapter also analyzes the influence of the political landscape, including the battle between secular and Islamist factions. An examination of how clashes between the state and Islamist organizations helps frame the treatment of the Palestinians. The political vacancy left by the expulsion

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<sup>42</sup> UN World Refugee Agency, UNRWA in Figures: As of 1 January 2010, <http://www.unrwa.org/userfiles/20100628261.pdf> (accessed September 3, 2010), 1.

<sup>43</sup> International Crisis Group, “Nurturing Instability: Lebanon’s Palestinian Refugee Camps,” Middle East Report, 84 (February 2009), i.

<sup>44</sup> Rosemary Sayigh, “Palestinians in Lebanon: Harsh Present, Uncertain Future,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 25:1 (Autumn, 1995), 37.

of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1982 led to an opening for the Islamists. This helps explain the treatment of the Palestinian refugees by the state. Finally, Palestinian identity politics is another factor influencing treatment of the refugees. Right of return matters in the treatment of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. Through this progression of the factors influencing Palestinian refugee treatment in Lebanon, the factors of economics and the politics emerge as the primary factors influencing the lack of rights afforded to the Palestinian refugees by the Lebanese state.

#### **A. HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE PALESTINIANS IN LEBANON**

In order to understand the plight of the Palestinians in Lebanon, a general historical overview is necessary. After the numerous Palestinians fled into neighboring Arab countries as a result of the conflict of 1948, the United Nations (UN) adopted Resolution 194 on December 11, 1948, calling for the displaced Palestinians to be allowed to return to the land now occupied by Israel.<sup>45</sup> With the lack of real implementation of Resolution 194, the UN created the institution of United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) to oversee the over 700,000 Palestinian refugees who had fled to the neighboring Arab countries. The work of UNRWA continued to evolve with no clear guidelines on the designated functions of UNRWA or a clear definition of who constituted a Palestinian refugee.<sup>46</sup> In addition, the budgetary constraints of UNRWA persist to plague the Palestinian refugees. Rosemary Sayigh notes the disparity in UNRWA aid between the host nations of Palestinian refugees when she states that from 1992–1993 the UNRWA budget for Lebanon made up only 11.8 percent of the budget. That amount equated to only \$204 per capita distribution, which is telling considering these refugees do not have access to Lebanese state services as they would in the other host states under UNRWA.<sup>47</sup> In comparison, the 2009 UNRWA report to the Commissioner General stated the allotted budget for Lebanon higher than

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<sup>45</sup> UN General Assembly. Third Session, Resolution 194 (III), para. 11. *Palestine: Progress Report of the UN Mediator*. <http://daccess-ddsny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/043/65/IMG/NR004365.pdf?OpenElement> (accessed August 25, 2010).

<sup>46</sup> Are Knudsen, “Widening the Protection Gap: The ‘Politics of Citizenship’ for Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon, 1948-2008.” *Journal of Refugee Studies* 22:1 (September 2009), 52–53.

<sup>47</sup> Rosemary Sayigh, “Palestinians in Lebanon: Harsh Present, Uncertain Future,” 38.

only Syria. While the troubles for refugees in Lebanon continue and the conditions in the camps deteriorate further, the UNRWA budget does not reflect a positive change for Palestinian refugees residing in Lebanon.<sup>48</sup> Sayigh observes that UNRWA's existence only increases the economic marginality of the refugees in Lebanon by preventing them from complete despair, but making their existence completely dependent on charity.<sup>49</sup> A look at the major factors influencing this pattern of disparity is crucial to understanding the treatment of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.

## **B. LEGAL STATUS OF THE PALESTINIANS IN LEBANON**

The first factor critical to understanding the treatment of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon is the legal status of the refugees. The UN's 1951 convention on refugees issued a clearer definition on refugees than previous UN pronouncements. The current UN definition of refugee established at the 1951 convention is a person who "owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country."<sup>50</sup> However, the 1951 convention specifically excluded the Palestinian refugees. The same Arab states that fought for exclusion of the Palestinians in the 1951 Convention on the grounds that they sought to preserve the Palestinians special status, never ratified the 1951 Convention. These same states do not observe the provisions for rights of refugees that were specified in that Convention.<sup>51</sup> The Palestinian refugees' legal status falls on the laws their host countries enact in relation to them.

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<sup>48</sup> UN General Assembly. Sixty-fifth Session, Supplement 13. Report of the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. A/65/13, 1 January-31 December 2009, 13.

<sup>49</sup> Rosemary Sayigh, "Palestinians in Camps: The New Reality, 1948-65," In *Sociology of "Developing Societies" the Middle East*, ed. Talal Asad and Roger Owen, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1983, 204.

<sup>50</sup> United Nations High Commission for Refugees. <http://www.unhcr.org.au/basicdef.shtml> (accessed November 10, 2010).

<sup>51</sup> Knudsen, "Widening the Protection Gap," 53.

The Arab states have made attempts at consensus on the issue of Palestinian refugees in their countries. At the League of Arab states meeting in 1965, a more concrete and united position of the Palestinian refugees was developed. Lebanon refused to fully accept the Arab League's Protocol for the Treatment of Palestinians' commonly referred to as the Casablanca Protocol. The Lebanese stipulated exceptions to the protocol including conditions on the potential for restrictions on Palestinian employment and the refugees' mobility to and from Lebanon.<sup>52</sup> This lack of concrete rights for the Palestinian refugees within Lebanon led to the Cairo Agreement in 1969 between the Lebanese government and the PLO. The Cairo Agreement gave the PLO self-governance of the refugee camps, more economic rights to the refugees, and allowed for Palestinian attacks on Israel from within Lebanon. This agreement meant to prevent the Lebanese army from entering the camps. However, the Cairo Agreement would prove untenable and would be repealed by the Lebanese cabinet in May 1987.<sup>53</sup> During this period, a lengthy civil war raged within Lebanon with fighting between the sects. This state of war led to the next agreement that would impact the treatment of the Palestinians in Lebanon.

The Ta'if Agreement of 1989 concluded the civil war. This agreement set the tone for the current treatment of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. Debates continue over the true make-up of the civil war. Should it be described as Christian versus Muslim? Perhaps defining the war by sectarian or territorial conflicts more accurately identifies the true framework of the war.<sup>54</sup> Even so, many within Lebanon continue to place the blame for the civil war with the Palestinian refugee population.<sup>55</sup> After the conclusion of war, the Lebanese public appeared to be united that the Palestinian refugees should not be permanently resettled or as it is sometimes referred to as *tawtin*. The other area of consensus was the need for stricter control of the camps where the refugees

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<sup>52</sup> League of Arab States, *Protocol for the Treatment of Palestinians in Arab States: "Casablanca Protocol," September 11, 1965*. <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/460a2b252.html> (accessed August 26, 2010): 1–2.

<sup>53</sup> Knudsen, "Widening the Protection Gap," 55 and Laleh Khalili, "A Landscape of Uncertainty: Palestinians in Lebanon," *Middle East Report* 236 (Fall 2005), 37.

<sup>54</sup> Martha Wenger and Julie Denney, "Lebanon's Fifteen-Year War 1975-1990," *Middle East Report* 162 (January/February, 1990), 23.

<sup>55</sup> Elizabeth Picard, *Lebanon: A Shattered Country*, New York, Homes and Meier, 2002, 180–181.

resided.<sup>56</sup> The sentiments on the blame for the civil war and fears of the camps lead in part to the state's continuation of poor treatment for the Palestinian refugees over the last twenty years.

Lebanese laws made the situation for Palestinian refugees difficult. At the time of initial Palestinian entry into Lebanon in 1948, Lebanon was without a refugee or asylum law. Palestinian refugees were not called refugees but instead called special foreigners. A 1960 law formally deemed the Palestinians in Lebanon as "stateless foreigners."<sup>57</sup> Adding to the issue of citizenship is the Lebanese law on female transfer of citizenship. The current nationality law states that even if born inside Lebanon, a Lebanese woman cannot pass on her Lebanese citizenship to her husband or children.<sup>58</sup> Additionally, due to their stateless condition, the Palestinian refugees of Lebanon rely on state-issued identification cards for official transactions and travel. The Lebanese government requires these identification cards to register births, marriages, and deaths. These cards are granted only to registered refugees; thus, approximately 3,000 refugees residing in Lebanon are without proper identification cards. Steps were taken in 2008 to legalize the unregistered refugees within Lebanon. The legal steps were enacted on a temporary basis. Without a permanent legal change to the status of the unregistered refugees, proper identification cards are not issued. Lack of a proper identification card for these refugees make freedom of movement difficult for this group.<sup>59</sup> The concept of statelessness is developed further when evaluating the factor of identity and its relationship to citizenship.

Lawmakers within Lebanon often cite the potential upsetting of the confessional balance if Palestinian refugees are granted citizenship or even additional rights. Thus, many favor restrictions on opportunities for employment, education, and property

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<sup>56</sup> Sayigh, "Palestinians in Lebanon: Harsh Present, Uncertain Future," 42.

<sup>57</sup> Knudsen, "Widening the Protection Gap," 55.

<sup>58</sup> Amnesty International. *Amnesty International Report 2010-Lebanon*, 28 May 2010, <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4c03a81a2d.html> (accessed August 26, 2010), 2

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.



ownership in lieu of permanent settlement of the Palestinians.<sup>60</sup> The fact that a majority of Palestinian refugees are of Sunni origin colors much of the discussion on the rights that they should be granted. Part of the Lebanese population, primarily the Maronite Christian portion, fears that more civic rights to the Palestinian refugees would lead to a shift in demographics in the Sunnis' favor. This could lead to what they hear would be a potentially dangerous Sunni military power.<sup>61</sup> Some worry that the repeated attention on naturalization or permanent settlement of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon only detracts from the real problems of Lebanon, such as Islamist Hezbollah's gaining control and stockpiling weapons within Lebanon.<sup>62</sup> International Crisis group cites a Lebanese parliamentarian saying, "Our official policy is to maintain Palestinians in a vulnerable, precarious situation to diminish prospects for their naturalization or permanent settlement." The same parliament member states that this policy comes from a place of assuring Lebanese economics and security.<sup>63</sup> This sentiment was confirmed in a study published by Hilal Khashan that polled 986 Lebanese citizens on the issue of permanent resettlement of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. The study polled the three major religious groups on the issue of the refugees in Lebanon. Khashan found that over half of the individuals polled had no contact with Palestinians. The poll cited 43 percent felt naturalization should not occur and 14 percent felt that the current policy of no naturalization was appropriate.<sup>64</sup> Khashan concludes that the idea of naturalization for the Palestinians does not have popular support in Lebanon. The conclusions reached by Khashan would coincide with the governmental position of Palestinian refugees not needing additional citizenship rights. Another conclusion offered in this study was that the any additional rights to the Palestinians could result in a balance of power struggle or civil war.

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<sup>60</sup> Reuters, "Lebanon Law Gives Palestinians Few Civil Rights," *The New York Times*, August 17, 2010, 1.

<sup>61</sup> International Crisis Group, "Nurturing Instability: Lebanon's Palestinian Refugee Camps," 13–14.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>64</sup> Hilal Khashan, "Palestinian Resettlement in Lebanon: Behind the Debate," *Montreal Studies on the Contemporary Arab World* (Montreal, Canada: Interuniversity Consortium for Arab Studies, April 1994) <http://prn.mcgill.ca/prn/papers/khashan.html> (accessed November 28, 2010).

### C. ECONOMICS OF THE PALESTINIANS IN LEBANON

The policy of economics in Lebanon spans many issues. A look at the education and employment situation of the Palestinian refugees gives a helpful overview of the economic factors that influence the treatment of the Palestinian refugees. Most of the Palestinian refugee education comes through UNRWA. As of January 2010, UNRWA operated 75 elementary and secondary schools in Lebanon with just under 33,000 students.<sup>65</sup> Yet those Palestinians, who are unable to get education in the camps, face difficulties obtaining education outside the camps. Due to changes in their status in 2002, the Palestinians became known as foreign students, which led to even higher tuition rates for higher education.<sup>66</sup> With the diminishing aid budget of UNRWA and fewer PLO-sponsored scholarships, the number of refugees continuing their education beyond elementary school dwindled.<sup>67</sup> Many Palestinian parents continue to place great importance on gaining education with the hope that it would secure better employment in Lebanon. More education has not always led to better jobs, but that trend may change in the future with labor law changes for the Palestinians in Lebanon.

Refugee employment is integral to accurately understanding the economic undertone that shapes the treatment of the Palestinians. As previously mentioned, the Palestinian refugees do not fall under the 1951 Convention on refugees that stipulated that work permits are not necessary. The Palestinians must apply for a work permit to complete any type of employment outside the camps.<sup>68</sup> These permits have not been easily available to the Palestinians. Additionally, work appears to be easier for women to obtain than it is for men. This is due to the NGO community's willingness to hire the women from the camps, and the women's willingness to accept lower wages.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> UN World Refugee Agency, UNRWA in Figures: As of 1 January 2010, 1.

<sup>66</sup> Reuters, "Lebanon Law Gives Palestinians Few Civil Rights," 1.

<sup>67</sup> Sayigh, "Palestinians in Lebanon: Harsh Present, Uncertain Future," 49.

<sup>68</sup> Sari Hanafi and Taylor Long. "Governance, Governmentalities, and the State of Exception in the Palestinian Refugee Camps of Lebanon," *Journal of Refugee Studies* 23:2 (May 2010), 146.

<sup>69</sup> Sayigh, "Palestinians in Lebanon: Harsh Present, Uncertain Future," 42.

Positive changes in employment restrictions for the Palestinian started in 2005. Fewer Syrian migrant workers work in Lebanon. The reduction of outside Syrian labor facilitated more job openings for the Palestinians. More jobs do not translate to more employment opportunities for the Palestinians. Restrictions on certain professions remain for the Palestinians. The medical and legal fields are still not open to Palestinians in Lebanon.<sup>70</sup> Despite some steps towards positive change, Human Rights Watch notes that concerning the 2005 reforms only 261 of 145,679 of the work permits granted were for Palestinians.<sup>71</sup> The claims that more work permits would be granted to the Palestinians did not appear to actually occur. Instead, the Palestinians still face difficulties in obtaining the necessary work permits for work outside the camps.

In another step toward progress, the Lebanese Parliament passed a law in August 2010 giving the Palestinian refugees access to more employment opportunities. The new labor law allows for Palestinians the work permits necessary to work outside the camps. While some progress can be seen through the new law on employment opportunities, some professions still remain banned for the Palestinians such as law and medicine.<sup>72</sup> Nevertheless, positive amendments to laws relating to the Lebanese Social Security system now allow the Palestinians to receive benefits. These are the same benefits that have been paid into by their employers for years, without the ability of the refugees to receive any payouts from them.<sup>73</sup> Despite these changes in employment laws for the Palestinian refugees, some fear that a reeducation of the Lebanese people would be necessary to even make the changes viable. Reuters notes that years of suspicion due to the civil war may make Lebanese employers still hesitant to hire Palestinians even with the law change.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Laleh Khalili, "A Landscape of Uncertainty: Palestinians in Lebanon," *Middle East Report* 236 (Fall, 2005), 38.

<sup>71</sup> Human Rights Watch, *Lebanon: Seize Opportunity to End Discrimination Against Palestinians*, June 18, 2010, <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4c2073b9c.html> (accessed August 26, 2010), 1.

<sup>72</sup> Reuters, "Lebanon Law Gives Palestinians Few Civil Rights," 1.

<sup>73</sup> UN News Service, *UN Welcomes Advance Enabling Palestinian Refugees to work in Lebanon*, August 19, 2010. <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4c739of2.html> (accessed August 26, 2010), 1.

<sup>74</sup> Reuters, "Lebanon Law Gives Palestinians Few Civil Rights," 2.

The changes in employment originally were paired with changes to allow for Palestinian property ownership. This part of the law did not pass. The aim of the law was to counteract a 2001 law passed by the Lebanese Parliament. The 2001 law made it illegal for Palestinians to own property. The right to own property had been held for decades by the Palestinians before this legal change.<sup>75</sup> In a *New York Times* article, Lebanese Christian parliamentarian George Adwan stated, “We agreed to give Palestinians the minimum of rights, which would improve their living conditions, and this was necessary.” He continues that, “We only took into consideration their conditions, but we haven’t moved any closer to making them citizens.”<sup>76</sup> This statement shows that while some progress has been made towards allowing for the Palestinians more civic rights, their fight for fair treatment within Lebanon continues. The economics of the country continue to heavily influence the policies that are enacted.

#### **D. SPACE WITHIN THE STATE AND THE PALESTINIANS IN LEBANON**

Space within the state is another factor that contributes to the treatment of refugees in Lebanon. Post-civil war, the Lebanese government began a program geared at economic recovery that focusing on construction and rebuilding of Beirut. However, the renewed focus on reconstruction of the war torn areas from the civil war excluded the decimated Palestinian refugee camps. Are Knudsen cites then Prime Minister Rafik Hariri stating that even though the Palestinian refugees’ living conditions remained atrocious after the civil war, any improvement of those conditions would only allow for permanent resettlement of the refugees. The same resettlement that polling indicates the population disapproves.<sup>77</sup> In the relatively geographically small country of Lebanon, the Palestinians are primarily confined to an even smaller slice of that space within the UNRWA refugee camps.

The make-up of Lebanon is key to understanding the rationale behind confining the Palestinian refugees to the camps. The small country of Lebanon houses at least 17

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<sup>75</sup> Human Rights Watch, Lebanon: Seize Opportunity to End Discrimination Against Palestinians, 1.

<sup>76</sup> Nada Bakri, “Lebanon Gives Palestinians New Work Rights,” *New York Times*, August 17, 2010.

<sup>77</sup> Knudsen, “Widening the Protection Gap,” 55

major sects. However, with no official census authorized since 1932, estimates of population breakdown are only guesses. Some estimates guess that the Muslim population of Lebanon now sits at approximately 60 percent of the population. This percentage comes without the adding the Palestinian Muslim refugees to the population totals.<sup>78</sup> With a political system that is based on the demographic breakdown of the country, much effort continues to maintain the separation of the Palestinians.

The Lebanese government confines the Palestinian refugees to the 12 UNRWA camps remaining after the civil war. With over half of the Palestinian refugees in camps, the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon represent the poorest segment of Lebanese society. The camps in Lebanon are considered the worst of the conditions offered by the Arab hosts of the Palestinians.<sup>79</sup> In response to war-related space issues in the country, the government continues to make a concerted effort to rid the country of the unofficial Palestinian refugee settlements throughout Lebanon. The government has also called for a moratorium on more building in and around the official camps. The state rejected a call for construction of additional camps.<sup>80</sup> These policies against rebuilding uphold the continuation of degrading conditions in the Palestinians camps.

## **E. CAMP SECURITY AND THE PALESTINIANS IN LEBANON**

The political composition of the camps is vital to understanding the conditions of those camps. Popular committees run the camps. The popular committees are a group of semi-official leaders who enforce the day-to-day workings of the camps. The principle function of the committees is to maintain good order and discipline within the camps. These individuals are not popularly elected. Outside parties in many cases vie for who they feel should be on the committees. The committees act as outside representative for the camps with Lebanese officials outside the camps.<sup>81</sup> The popular committees do not

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<sup>78</sup> Wenger and Denney, "Lebanon's Fifteen-Year War 1975–1990," 23.

<sup>79</sup> Knudsen, "Widening the Protection Gap," 51.

<sup>80</sup> Sayigh, "Palestinians in Lebanon: Harsh Present, Uncertain Future," 43.

<sup>81</sup> Knudsen, "Islamism in the Diaspora: Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon," 219.

hold the same level of credibility as they did during the PLO's time in Lebanon.<sup>82</sup> The leadership is deeply fractured. The stated purpose of the appointed leaders in the popular committees is to arbitrate disputes, assist in security, negotiate with outside leaders, and work with UNRWA. However, the intended function of the popular committees is not fulfilled. This places the Palestinians in a more precarious position in Lebanon. The void of real leadership further clears a path for Islamists intervention in the camps, which will be developed later in the chapter.<sup>83</sup>

After the civil war, the Lebanese citizens feared the camps as areas of insecurity. Concerns began to spread that the Palestinian refugee camps housed militants, allowed drug trafficking, and harbored weapons caches. Due to the camps inability to benefit from the Lebanese economic boom, the camps remained areas of poverty with poor health and sanitation standards.<sup>84</sup> Moreover, UN Security Council laws calling for disarmament of the camps appear to enforce the sense within Lebanon that the Palestinians are dangerous. Many refugees translate the numerous laws restricting their rights as part of a larger policy towards fully disarming the camps to prevent perceived violence.<sup>85</sup> A frustration continues among the Palestinian population that a minority of Palestinians' seeks violence, but the entire Palestinian community is punished. The Palestinians lack a clear leader in Lebanon to advocate for their rights. The Palestinians fear that they will not receive additional rights in Lebanon when a fear of violence from the camps remains. Unless a strong leader is able to emerge and advocate that the violence does not represent the entire refugee population, then additional rights may be unreachable. The move to disarm the camps demonstrated the lack of a leader from the Palestinians to condemn the violence or advocate for the peaceful portion of the Palestinians.

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<sup>82</sup> Khalili, "A Landscape of Uncertainty: Palestinians in Lebanon," 38.

<sup>83</sup> Hanafi and Long, "Governance, Governmentalities, and the State of Exception in the Palestinian Refugee Camps of Lebanon," 139–140.

<sup>84</sup> Knudsen, "Widening the Protection Gap," 61.

<sup>85</sup> Khalili, "A Landscape of Uncertainty: Palestinians in Lebanon," 38.

The repression of the Palestinian refugees in camps like Nahr al-Bared and Ayn al-Hilweh at the hands of the Lebanese army enhances the idea that the Palestinians are being persecuted unfairly. The Palestinian refugees fear that the persecution and lack of security will continue within the camps. They do not see the Lebanese army as a force to help them. Thus, some Palestinians feel that the best hope is to align themselves with the Islamists who will protect them and claim to understand their plight of the victims.<sup>86</sup> This sentiment facilitated the entrance of Fatah al-Islam into a refugee camp, since the Islamist group appeared to promote good Islamic values and provided much needed security for the camp.<sup>87</sup> In May 2007, 15 weeks of fighting commenced between the Lebanese Army and Fatah al-Islam in and near the camp of Nahr el-Bared. The fighting left over 30,000 refugees homeless, due to the destruction of the camp.<sup>88</sup> The fact that the Lebanese government has yet to allow for the rebuilding of Nahr el-Bared, after the fighting of 2007, has led many refugees to distrust the state more. This, too, has led to some Palestinians placing renewed trust in the Islamists to provide protection and services.<sup>89</sup>

Security issues continue in other camps, as well. In the camps like Ayn Hilwa entry is restricted and heavily guarded. The Lebanese army, in conjunction with the popular committee, watches the entry points to the camps to ensure militants and weapons do not become harbored within the camps.<sup>90</sup> The heavily restricted access to the camps, only adds to the feeling of despair for the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. By corralling a majority of Palestinian refugees into shameful conditions within the camps, the Lebanese government again demonstrates its feelings integration of the Palestinians. The restriction of the Palestinians to the camps shows that the state has no plans to make full integration to Lebanese society a reality at this time.

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<sup>86</sup> Hanafi and Long, "Governance, Governmentalities, and the State of Exception in the Palestinian Refugee Camps of Lebanon," 149.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 151.

<sup>88</sup> Knudsen, "Widening the Protection Gap," 67.

<sup>89</sup> Gaim Kibreab, "Citizenship Rights and Repatriation of Refugees," *International Migration Review* 37:1 (Spring 2003), 67.

<sup>90</sup> Knudsen, "Islamism in the Diaspora: Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon," 219.

## **F. POLITICS OF THE PALESTINIANS IN LEBANON**

The next major factor in the treatment of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon is the political actions of the state. The political leaders of the Palestinian cause, the secular PLO, based itself within Lebanon for most of the 1970s and into the early 1980s. Leading to many critics voicing concern that the PLO's presence had implemented a state within a state in Lebanon.<sup>91</sup> The presence of the PLO in Lebanon disrupted the political balance in Lebanon, since the PLO and the Lebanese state both vied for power in the camps. The expulsion of the PLO in 1982 resulted in a political void of legitimate leadership in Lebanon. After the expulsion of the PLO, the concern over security within the camps moved to the forefront. The Palestinian refugees were vulnerable with the PLO gone, resulting in massacres conducted by the Phalange militia with the help of the Israel army in the camps of Sabra and Shatila in 1982.<sup>92</sup>

The repression of rights by the Lebanese state to assure that the Palestinian refugees remain out of Lebanese politics is another political factor affecting the Palestinians. The Palestinians declare their intention to steer clear of the Lebanese political affairs. The nature of politics in the region and the Israeli-Palestinian crisis make assertions by the Palestinians to stay out of Lebanese domestic politics difficult. They are in many ways intrinsically linked.<sup>93</sup> The refugees have no direct say in the political fights within Lebanon, but their existence in Lebanon and their relation to the broader issue of a Palestinian state make it impossible to separate them fully from Lebanese domestic politics. Many politicians use the issue of granting or not granting Palestinian refugees rights in their platforms for election. Despite the Palestinian issue in politics, the Palestinians have no voting rights. They must turn to political allies that will help them improve their situation. Electoral victory by Islamist groups like Hezbollah, who support the Palestinian refugees, only increases support for Islamists by the Palestinians. These Islamist victories then muddle the political clout of the groups that hope to repress the Palestinian refugees.

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<sup>91</sup> Wenger and Denney, "Lebanon's Fifteen-Year War 1975–1990," 24.

<sup>92</sup> Khalili, "A Landscape of Uncertainty: Palestinians in Lebanon," 38.

<sup>93</sup> International Crisis Group, "Nurturing Instability: Lebanon's Palestinian Refugee Camps," 9.



Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) official Abu Jaber notes that the restrictive policies towards the Palestinians only lead to radicalism and violence. He calls the precarious situation a “time-bomb” for the Lebanese population and the refugee population.<sup>94</sup> Additionally, fears have surfaced that the economic troubles continuing in Lebanon push the Palestinian refugee community to the Islamists for economic support due to the government’s lack of assistance to the refugees.<sup>95</sup> While the restrictive policies of the Lebanese government may be seen as beneficial overall to the Lebanese population, many feel that they turn the Palestinian refugees towards the Islamists. The same Islamists some within the government fear do not have Lebanon’s best interests as their primary goal. This illustrates a trepidation that repressive policies on Palestinian rights may create a less stable refugee population that turns to Islamists for support.

The connection between more basic rights for the Palestinians in Lebanon and right of return are often cited together. The Palestinians seek to be allowed to return to their former homes from Mandatory Palestine or a new Palestinian state. In requesting more rights within Lebanon, does that dilute the Palestinian goal of right of return? The refugees see these two elements as mutually exclusive. An internal debate rages among the Palestinian population over how right of return factors into their present situation. The Lebanese government has been able to use this debate to further their position that they are supporting the Palestinian right of return by not granting more rights. The conjecture that that support of more rights in Lebanon would diminish the goal of right of return primarily comes from the Lebanese population and not the Palestinian refugees. The state claims their repression of rights is in order to maintain the right of return for the Palestinians.

## **G. THE PLO, ISLAMISTS, AND THE PALESTINIANS IN LEBANON**

Islamist groups are an important political element factoring into the treatment of the Palestinians. The Islamists willingness to offer civic services otherwise unavailable to the Palestinian refugee community draws many refugees to Islamist causes. Islamists

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<sup>94</sup> International Crisis Group, “Nurturing Instability,” 18.

<sup>95</sup> Knudsen, “Islamism in the Diaspora: Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon,” 222.

messages appeal due to how they frame their message. They also offer civic services to initially draw new recruits into the organization. This level of participation, through the social and cultural aspects of the organization, is a gradual way to attract new people to the groups, especially the Palestinian refugees who have no access to state civic services. The participation in social aspects of the Islamic organizations appears safe compared to other political aspects of the organization, creating a “parallel Islamic sector.” The “parallel Islamic sector” allows a refugee to have access to health care, daycare, trash collecting, religious teaching, and other social services not easily obtained if not affiliated with the Islamist group.<sup>96</sup> Through their civic programs, Islamists are assisting the community in obtaining the things the state has not been able to provide such as employment, health care, and education via their Islamic sector. These factors enable the Islamists to gain the trust and loyalty of the disillusioned public and in the case of Lebanon the victimized Palestinian refugees.<sup>97</sup>

While many list Hezbollah as using civic services to entice recruits, Hamas too has gained support from the Palestinian refugee community for its assistance in providing social services to the camp community. Often support for groups such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad is explained by the fact that they are Palestinian Islamists groups. However, support for Islamic Jihad can be explained beyond their link as Palestinian Islamists, but to their provision of social services for the refugees such as clubs, clinics, and schools. While both Islamists organization enjoy some support from the Palestinian refugees, both organizations’ support fluctuates as funding restrictions prevent consistency in providing these social services to the Palestinian refugees.<sup>98</sup>

In the course of their indoctrination of new people into their organization, the Islamists advocate the message that the work of the Islamist organization is more than just a push towards activism but it is a “moral obligation.”<sup>99</sup> Carrie Wickham states in

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<sup>96</sup> Carrie Rosefsy Wickham, *Mobilizing Islam: Religion, Activism, and Political Change in Egypt* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 152–153.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 159.

<sup>98</sup> Knudsen, “Islamism in the Diaspora: Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon,” 227.

<sup>99</sup> Wickham, *Mobilizing Islam*, 151.

*Mobilizing Islam* that Islamists, “through the medium of the *da’wa* or ‘call to God,’ they promote a new, activist conception of Islam, claiming that it was a *fard ‘ayn*, a duty incumbent to every Muslim, to participate in the Islamic reform of society and state.”<sup>100</sup> This idea of participating as a “moral obligation” is discussed upon people entering the organization for the civic activities. Only after the civic services have enticed someone to seek out the Islamist organization does the push towards the “moral obligation” factor into the recruitment. The Islamists use the idea of Islam as an answer to social problems and by doing so promote other facets of their organization. The idea of “moral obligation” resonates the Palestinian refugees who seek a place to belong due to years as stateless people who live in a country that grants them few civil rights. Shari Hanafi and Taylor Long also note that the refugees develop a sense of what is right and wrong from the Islamist religious figures in the camps vice the previously esteemed PLO.<sup>101</sup> Coupled with the idea that belonging is a “moral obligation” is the idea that the fight for Palestinian statehood is a “moral obligation” cements support for Islamists in Lebanon.

After luring recruits in via the civic services, Islamists are able to mobilize recruits through reprioritizing an individual’s actions through a “transvaluation of values.”<sup>102</sup> In many areas the traditional value that was placed on high levels of education became less important with an absence of jobs being available. This proves especially important in a situation like the Palestinians in Lebanon where there is little access to higher education or adequate employment for the refugees. Islamists used their idea of moral dominance to advance their platform that being a good Muslim is what should to be valued.<sup>103</sup> Islamists tactically frame the problem as a government’s incorrect following of Islam resulting in the dire situations in many Middle East countries. If the government practiced Islam properly, this situation would not occur. By turning to the Islamists, the Palestinian refugee practices Islam, as it is intended and opens up to the rewards that come to a good Muslim. The Islamists use the religion of

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<sup>100</sup> Wickham, *Mobilizing Islam*, 120.

<sup>101</sup> Hanafi and Long, “Governance, Governmentalities, and the State of Exception in the Palestinian Refugee Camps of Lebanon,” 153.

<sup>102</sup> Wickham, *Mobilizing Islam*, 165.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 170–171.

Islam to entice Palestinian refugees against the Lebanese government that is seen as non-Muslim, corrupt, and highly fractionalized due to the confessional system. Linking Islam to resistance movements grants a level of significance beyond just nationalism, but also makes it a significant religious obligation.<sup>104</sup> The idea that being a good Muslim will gain the right and true things is compatible with Palestinian nationalist goals. The stateless refugees have no rights and no home. The idea that Islam is the answer aligns Palestinian support for Islamist organizations. Islamism has been seen by the Palestinians as the only real political solution, due to the reluctance of the Lebanese state to take positive measures towards more civic rights for the Palestinians.

Through this evolution of political factors that influences the treatment of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, a few key elements emerge. First, the confessional system of politics in Lebanon factors heavily into the treatment given to the Palestinians. This system offers an outlet for harboring resentment of Palestinians in Lebanon. The various factions in government use the possibility of an unbalance in the system to justify the treatment given to the Palestinians. Politicians cite fears of a Sunni majority if the Palestinians are integrated to a greater extent. The political vacuum left with the expulsion of the secular PLO created fears by the Lebanese public over insecurity of the camps. The Palestinians were left with no real representative inside Lebanon. They no longer have an advocate fighting for more civic rights. This led in part to the Palestinian refugees turning to Islamist organizations for leadership. A type of leadership that is different from the secular leadership of the PLO. The political actions of the various factions within Lebanon profoundly affect the treatment of the Palestinians.

## **H. IDENTITY OF THE PALESTINIANS IN LEBANON**

The impact of the Palestinian identity on the treatment of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon must be examined. Despite restrictive practices against the Palestinian refugees within Lebanon, the presence of a Palestinian national identity continues in the camps.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Mohammed Ayoob, *The Many Faces of Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Muslim World* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2008), 112

<sup>105</sup> Mahmoud Mi'ari, "Transformation of Collective Identity in Palestine," *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 44, no. 6 (December 2009), 584.

Events, such as the massacres at the Sabra and Shatila camps, reinforce the overall Palestinian identity of the refugees in the camps.<sup>106</sup> Another example of Palestinian identity in the camps can be seen in the camp structure that resembles the villages left behind in Palestine. This reproduction of the homes left in 1948 symbolized the desire to remember the refugees' separate Palestinian identity and facilitate that this identity remain preserved for future generations.<sup>107</sup>

Furthermore, the importance of Palestinian nationalism plays into the overall sense of identity. The fragmentation among the Palestinian refugees in the camps comes in part to the deviating views on Palestinian nationalism. Some feel that the secular view of Fateh/PLO in seeking more rights for the Palestinians, but also seeking a compromise with Israel, is the answer. However, others such as the Islamist groups in the camp endorse the idea that nationalism can come with more rights in Lebanon, but a compromise with Israel has no part in the fight for Palestinian nationalism. Knudsen suggests that the Palestinians in Lebanon concern themselves more with maintaining their identity and obtaining a Palestinian homeland. They find the domestic politics of Lebanon to be not as vital to their situation.<sup>108</sup>

Another element of identity often cited is that of the Palestinians as victims. Some argue that the Palestinians repeated representation of themselves as victims at the hands of Israel and the Lebanese state enhances the idea of the refugees causing their own problems in the camps. If the refugees were capable of taking care of themselves in the camps, then a security dilemma that requires Lebanese government intervention would prove unnecessary. Hanafi and Long dispute that the Palestinian identification causes the security troubles in the camps. Instead, the Lebanese state's repression leads to the security condition seen in the camps.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Mi'ari, "Transformation of Collective Identity in Palestine," 586.

<sup>107</sup> Knudsen, "Islamism in the Diaspora: Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon," 220.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 230.

<sup>109</sup> Hanafi and Long, "Governance, Governmentalities, and the State of Exception in the Palestinian Refugee Camps of Lebanon," 155.

Some propose that Lebanese support of the Palestinians' right of return is not out of sympathy for the struggle of the Palestinian, but instead because of an underlying desire for the expulsion of the Palestinians from Lebanon.<sup>110</sup> The discussion of returning the Palestinians to a newly appointed Palestinian comes up during the two-party talks. Current estimates note that only about three percent of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon were born in Palestine. The majority of refugees currently in Lebanon originally hailed from the area of Galilee and not Gaza or the West Bank.<sup>111</sup> Discussions on Palestinians returning to a new homeland continue, but the question remains on how many Palestinians would want to return. The desire to return could lessen if the only option was to an unfamiliar land. The Palestinians may seek to return to Palestine only if their rights remain so repressed in Lebanon. The argument can be made that the repression of rights is to make sure that the Palestinians would want to return to a future Palestinian state. This would lessen the state's responsibility for an additional people group. This would also prevent any future integration of the Sunni Palestinians into the Lebanese confessional political system.

While much of the resistance to citizenship in Lebanon stems from a Palestinian right of return, the refugees maintain the call for more civic rights within Lebanon. They do not call for citizenship. Some fear that would jeopardize their goal of right of return. The fear inside the camps becomes that permanent settlement in Lebanon would represent a symbolic wiping out of the Palestinian identity.<sup>112</sup> Hezbollah advocates that granting additional rights to the Palestinian refugees is not incompatible with the right of return. Aside from the Palestinians, Hezbollah is the only Lebanese civic group to publically call for more rights within Lebanon while still maintaining right of return.<sup>113</sup> The Palestinian identity comes in part from their place as stateless people. Especially in Lebanon where they are listed as stateless on their identification documents, the identity

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<sup>110</sup> Khalili, "A Landscape of Uncertainty: Palestinians in Lebanon," 35.

<sup>111</sup> Rex Brynen, "Imagining a Solution: Final Status Arrangements and Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon," *Journal of Palestinian Studies* 26:2 (Winter 1997), 48.

<sup>112</sup> Knudsen, "Islamism in the Diaspora: Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon," 221.

<sup>113</sup> Knudsen, "Widening the Protection Gap," 65.

of being stateless continues to haunt the Palestinian people. The identity of being without a home signifies the true plight of the Palestinians.<sup>114</sup>

The Palestinians continue to live in unfortunate conditions within the camps of Lebanon. This chapter outlines the principle factors that influence the treatment of the Palestinians in Lebanon. Palestinians in Lebanon receive the least legal rights of any of the UNRWA refugees. The refugees do not have citizenship, property, or employment rights on par with Lebanese citizens. The next issue for consideration was the economic situation in Lebanon. Employment rights for the Palestinians have been restricted due to long held fears that the introduction of Palestinian workers would disrupt the Lebanese domestic balance. Current strides are being undertaken to improve the employment rights. The rights, however, are still not on par with Lebanese citizens. The space within Lebanon also factors into the treatment of the Palestinians. Palestinians are restricted to camps. The camps offer poor living conditions. The Lebanese government seeks to reduce the number of camps in Lebanon. This goal is being achieved, in part, by the government's unwillingness to rebuild camps affected by civil violence in Lebanon. The confessional system of governance significantly affects the rights afforded to the Palestinians. Concerns continue that granting any additional rights to the Palestinians would disrupt that confessional political balance. The relationship of the refugee population with the secular PLO and Islamists organizations also affects their treatment. The expulsion of the PLO in the 1980s left a leadership void among the Palestinians. Islamist organizations like Hezbollah have filled that void in supporting the Palestinian cause. They have called for more rights for the Palestinians. Additionally, they have maintained that more rights for the Palestinians in Lebanon do not dilute right of return. Finally, the Palestinians maintain a separate identity. Due to a lack of integration into Lebanese society, the Palestinians maintain a very separate identity inside the camps. The importance of right of return remains an integral part of that identity. Changes in that identity appears unlikely until more rights facilitate a more comprehensive

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<sup>114</sup> Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2010, 2.

integration process. The current state of affairs in Lebanon appears to be moving towards more rights for the Palestinians. However, time will tell if true reform occurs in the treatment of the Palestinians.

Despite over sixty years of statelessness, Palestinian refugees still receive relatively few civic rights within Lebanon. The cycle of aid from non-governmental agencies and UNRWA only maintains the situation of aid being necessary for the survival of the refugee community. Factors including legal status, economic conditions, space within the state, political landscape, and the Palestinian identity all impact the discriminatory treatment of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. Through evaluation of factors affecting the treatment of the refugees, the economic and political make-up emerged as the primary factors swaying treatment of Palestinians. These two factors appear to be inter-related on many levels. The span of economic inferiority among the refugees led to despair in the camps. The narrative shows that the state deliberately allowed the economic situation in the camps to occur, due to fears that adding the Palestinians legally to the Lebanese economy would negatively affect the political balance. The void left with the PLO's expulsion from Lebanon, led to the Palestinian refugees looking for a leader to advocate for additional rights in Lebanon. Islamist groups, who in some cases the state feared, filled this void. Overall, the Lebanese government has allowed fears and feelings to impact their treatment of the Palestinian refugees that they host. Changing the mindset of the Lebanese people, could lead to better relations with the refugees who only seek more equality in Lebanon. More rights that would not need to impact the confessional political system. There could be a difference between more rights that would be a better life for the Palestinians and full integration. The state has made some strides towards equality for the Palestinian refugees through employment reform. Until the state willingly makes changes to its laws, allowing for property ownership, more educational access, and freedom of movement the situation for the Palestinian will not improve to the levels necessary to call the Palestinians' conditions humane. This positive change can be completed with consensus among the sectarian groups and Palestinian leadership that more rights within Lebanon is not a denial of right of return, it is instead the civilized path.



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### III. PALESTINIAN REFUGEES SYRIA: ALTERNATE THEORIES FOR DISPARITY IN TREATMENT

The influx of Palestinian refugees into Syria began with the 1948 conflict. Between 70,000 and 100,000 Palestinians entered as a result of the 1948 conflict.<sup>115</sup> This first influx was not the only event that created the Palestinian refugee situation in Syria. Again in 1967, the Israeli occupation of the Golan Heights caused the movement of approximately 100,000 Palestinian refugees into Syria. Conflicts in neighboring countries Jordan and Lebanon facilitated more Palestinian refugees entering into Syria. Current UNRWA figures estimate over 477,000 registered Palestinian refugees in Syria as of June 20, 2010.<sup>116</sup> With the conflict in Iraq beginning in 2003, another refugee crisis of both Palestinian and Iraqi refugees began for Syria. Making Syria a state that must deal with multiple refugee populations, and civil unrest among its own population. The Syrian government operates under a sense of obligation in aiding the Palestinians. Holding onto to past Arab nationalist commitments, governs much of Syrian policy on refugees. Despite the fact that clinging on to those commitments constitutes a burden for the Syrian state.<sup>117</sup>

This chapter reviews the influence of the major factors on the treatment of Palestinian refugees in Syria. The first factor is the legal status of the Palestinians in Syria. These laws include the rights afforded towards citizenship, education, property, and medical services. How the economics within Syria affect the treatment of Palestinian refugees is then examined. To better understand this factor, a look at employment opportunities for the Palestinians is evaluated. How has Syria handled economic hardships? The space within the state is the next factor that influences the treatment of the Palestinians. The role of the UNRWA camps in that space is vital to determine its

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<sup>115</sup> Sherifa Shafie, FMO Research Guide: Palestinian Refugees in Syria, March 2003, <http://www.forcedmigration.org/guides/fmo017/fmo017.pdf> (accessed April 2, 2011), 2 and Laurie Brand, "Palestinians in Syria: The Politics of Integration," *Middle East Journal* 42:4 (Autumn 1988), 622.

<sup>116</sup> UN Relief and Works Agency, UNRWA in Figures: As of 30 June 2010, [http://www.unrwa.org/userfiles/file/statistics/UNRWA\\_in\\_figuresJune\\_2010\\_English.pdf](http://www.unrwa.org/userfiles/file/statistics/UNRWA_in_figuresJune_2010_English.pdf) (accessed May 7, 2011), 1.

<sup>117</sup> Ashraf al-Khalidi, Sophia Hoffman, and Victor Tanner, "Iraqi Refugees in the Syrian Arab Republic: A Field Based Snapshot," Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institute, June, 2007, 20.

relevance on the treatment of the Palestinians. The next factor influencing the Palestinians is the political situation. This section discusses the political make-up of the Syrian regime and its impact on the treatment of refugees. In relation to the political factor, the influence of Islamist organizations and Syrian alliances in the region factors into the discussion on the treatment of the Palestinians. Finally, the chapter offers a look at the role of the Palestinian identity in the treatment of the refugees in Syria. Right of return remains a vital element of the Palestinian identity. After illustrating the importance of each of these factors, the factors of economics and politics emerge as the most vital in understanding the treatment of the Palestinians by the Syrian state. The reasoning for these two factors emerging, as the most fundamental in the treatment of the Palestinians is explained as each factor is examined.

#### **A. HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE PALESTINIANS IN SYRIA**

The general attitude towards refugee integration in Syria began during the Palestinian refugee migration of 1948. At the time of the flood of refugees into Syria, the Syrian economy unlike those of neighboring Lebanon and Jordan was relatively stable. The refugees entered and only made up a slight minority in the country. The population of Palestinians in Syria to this day only makes up two to three percent of the population.<sup>118</sup> Thus, at the time of the original refugee situation, Syria put into place policies to integrate the Palestinian refugees with the same rights as Syrian citizens. The real exception to those rights was citizenship. Maintaining right of return is often offered as a reason for not offering Palestinians citizenship in Syria.

Syria remains a fascinating study in relation to its neighbors. While its neighbors, Jordan and Lebanon have encountered their own enthralling sagas with their Palestinian refugee populations, in many ways Syria has played a role in those events. Syria not only has its own Palestinian refugee situation to handle, but has, throughout the past few decades, acted on behalf of Palestinian refugees in the region. This interventionist attitude is discussed later in the chapter.

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<sup>118</sup> Laurie Brand, "Palestinians in Syria: The Politics of Integration," *Middle East Journal* 42:4 (Autumn 1988), 622.

Sunni Muslims constitute a majority of the Syrian population. This coincides with the primarily Sunni persuasion of the Palestinian refugee population. Additionally, factoring in to the current Palestinian refugee situation in Syria is the influx of Palestinian refugees from Iraq starting in 2003. Due to violence in Iraq, Palestinians began to enter into Syria between 2003 and 2005. They moved into the Yarmouk area near Damascus. Most of the refugees that entered from Iraq are not registered refugees with the UN. The refugees entering from Iraq were Sunni. Much of their fear of persecution inside Iraq came from their Sunni religious beliefs. They had received privileged treatment under the Saddam Hussein regime.<sup>119</sup> The changes in Iraq led to many fearing persecution. Leading to many fleeing to neighboring states for refuge.

## **B. LEGAL STATUS OF THE PALESTINIANS IN SYRIA**

Numerous laws constitute the legal status of Palestinian refugees in Syria. The initial law comprising legal rights afforded to the Palestinian refugees in the Syrian Arab Republic is no. 260, from 1956. Like the League of Arab States “Casablanca Protocol,” signed later, it specifies that Palestinians in Syria have the same responsibilities as Syrian citizens without the same citizenship and political participation rights. The Palestinians in Syria can legally be employed and work in the Syrian civil service. During the period of a unified Syria and Egypt, then President Gamal Abdel-Nasser added Decree no. 28, allowing the Palestinian refugees in Syria to be issued travel documents.<sup>120</sup>

More legal changes came in 1963, when the Syrian government enacted Law no. 1311, adding additional qualifiers to the travel document issuance for the Palestinians in Syria. The law called for travel documents to be issued if the Palestinian refugees were registered with the General Authority for Palestine Arab Refugees (GAPAR). GAPAR along with UNRWA assists in the running of the Palestinian refugee camps in Syria. The travel documents under this law are valid for six years like those of Syrian citizens. The principle behind these documents is to make travel processes easier for the Palestinians. Since Syria supported the Casablanca Protocol of 1965 in its entirety, they accepted the

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<sup>119</sup> al-Khalidi, Hoffman, and Tanner, “Iraqi Refugees in the Syrian Arab Republic,” 14.

<sup>120</sup> Shafie, *FMO Research Guide: Palestinian Refugees in Syria*, 3.

specification that the Palestinian refugees are entitled to employment, travel papers, and other rights on par with the citizens of Syria.<sup>121</sup> However, legal changes made full implementation of the Casablanca Protocol incomplete. Another law change in 1999 made travel between Lebanon and Syria possible with Palestinian identification cards.<sup>122</sup> The change to facilitate easier travel between Syria and Lebanon came in part due to the entangled politics of Syria and Lebanon at that time.

The Syrian government began to place restrictions on Palestinians entering from Iraq beginning in 2003. The policy on refugees entering from Iraq changed again in 2006. The Syrian government began restricting entry. This restrictive policy led to refugees being stranded on the Iraqi-Jordanian border, since the Jordanian border was also restricted. After international negotiations, the Syria government changed the policy and allowed the stranded group to enter Syria. This group is permitted only some access to services in Syria.<sup>123</sup> This incident illustrates the burden felt by the influx of the refugees. Syria began to feel the need to restrict services allowed for the refugees when such a significant number began to tax the system. Syria did a poor job anticipating the taxation on the public services when the refugee population swelled. Prior to international intervention, the Syrian government chose restrictive policies to remedy the problem of a swelling refugee situation. In order to prevent the situation from growing too rapidly and affecting the Syrian citizenry, the government put new entrance restrictions in place. The restrictions aimed to prevent government provided civic services from being too heavily taxed by the refugee population. The taxing of the system would make for less accessibility and resources available for the Syrian citizens. This would negatively impact Syrian's citizens' ability to efficiently use services provided to them by the government. However, those same restrictions led to concerns that the Syrian government, which had long advocated its role aiding to the greater Arab cause, was turning its back on the same cause. This regional issue demonstrates the

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<sup>121</sup> League of Arab States, Protocol for the Treatment of Palestinians in Arab States: "Casablanca Protocol," September 11, 1965, <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/460a2b252.html> (accessed August 26, 2010), 1

<sup>122</sup> Shafie, *FMO Research Guide: Palestinian Refugees in Syria*, 2.

<sup>123</sup> al-Khalidi, Hoffman, and Tanner, "Iraqi Refugees in the Syrian Arab Republic," 14.

bureaucratic burdens of an open-door policy when the influx of people is sudden. Eventually, the policy at the borders returned to a restrictive policy. Many Palestinians remain in refugee camps on the Iraqi border with Syria hoping for entrance into Syria.<sup>124</sup> These and other Palestinian refugees fall outside the bounds of international laws on refugees. The Palestinian refugees in these cases are classified as stateless. Unless Syria decided to make changes to its laws on refugees, the situation will remain difficult for these refugees on the Iraq-Syria border. The current legal restrictions in place in Syria are to prevent the increased refugee population from taxing the governmentally provided services to the Syrian population. The restrictions, however, do not prevent the refugee crisis from continuing on the border. The restrictive policies by the state may seek to prevent interrupted services for Syrian citizens. However, the policies conflict with a Syrian message of representing a greater Arab cause.

Another legal factor influencing the treatment of Palestinian refugees in Syria is employment. In Syria, Palestinians enjoy the access to employment on par with Syrian citizens. Syria does not require that Palestinians register for work permits to seek employment. Since there are few restrictions on employment, Palestinians are able to own their own businesses and join professional organizations. Palestinian men are required to perform military service with the Palestinian Liberation Army controlled by Syrian officials.<sup>125</sup> Additionally, the Palestinian population may receive retirement benefits like Syrian citizens. This allows Palestinians to work not only in private sector but also the public sector.<sup>126</sup> UNRWA does offer a vocational training center in Damascus for Palestinian refugees, yet with only the solitary center not all employment needs can be handled. UNRWA offers a microfinance program to assist Palestinian refugees with starting small businesses if they are unable to secure a bank loan. The program continues to expand to additional locations in Syria due to great success since its inception in 2003.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> al-Khalidi, Hoffman, and Tanner, "Iraqi Refugees in the Syrian Arab Republic, 15.

<sup>125</sup> Shafie, *FMO Research Guide: Palestinian Refugees in Syria*, 4.

<sup>126</sup> Brand, "Palestinians in Syria: The Politics of Integration," 632.

<sup>127</sup> UN Relief and Works Agency, *Syria*, <http://www.unrwa.org/etemplate.php?id=55> (accessed May 6, 2011), 1.

A legal factor often not afforded to Palestinians is property ownership. Syria allows Palestinians to own property. However, restrictions persist on Palestinians owning agricultural property.<sup>128</sup> The fact that Palestinians are able to own property does offer the Palestinian refugee population an alternative to residing in the camps in Syria. The make-up of the camps will be discussed further, later in the chapter.

Next, the legal factor of education influences the treatment of the Palestinians. UNRWA provides most education for Palestinian refugee children in Syria. They run 118 schools throughout Syria. The schools operate under the national curriculum of Syria's Ministry of Education. Over 65,000 Palestinian children attend schools run by UNRWA.<sup>129</sup> However, the access to schools beyond primary education remains limited. Palestinian refugees are eligible to use the Syrian educational system at no charge.<sup>130</sup> The accessibility of education outside of the camps can be difficult to obtain if no schools are located in the immediate geographic location of the refugees residence. The right to outside education is allowed, but the availability is not always practical. Since UNRWA education is provided only to the primary level, many Palestinian refugees in rural area with limited transportation face imposing difficulties gaining education beyond the primary level.

Palestinian refugees in Syria may obtain higher educational degrees. The percentage of refugees obtaining those degrees has remained relatively constant. More men than women obtain higher degrees among the refugee population in Syria, but current statistics show that the percentage of 50–59 year-olds with higher degrees and those in their 20s and 30s remains about the same around 38 percent.<sup>131</sup> The possibility for more education does not appear to have translated in higher numbers of graduates despite the legal ability to further education for Palestinians.

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<sup>128</sup> Shafie, FMO Research Guide: Palestinian Refugees in Syria, 4.

<sup>129</sup> UNRWA, "Syria," 1.

<sup>130</sup> Age A. Tiltne, "Keeping Up: A Brief on the Living Conditions of Palestinian Refugees in Syria," Oslo: Fafo, 2007, 27.

<sup>131</sup> Tiltne, "Keeping Up: A Brief on the Living Conditions of Palestinian Refugees in Syria," 28.

An area where progress appears to be seen is in the literacy rate among the Palestinian refugees. During its study on living conditions in the Palestinian refugee camps in Syria, Fafo concluded that Palestinian refugees in Syria are more literate than camp dwellers in Jordan and Syria. They noted that Palestinian refugees exhibited a lower illiteracy rate than the Syrian population.<sup>132</sup> The data from this study distinguished between literacy assumed due to primary education and literacy assumed due to response on the ability to read a basic newspaper and basic writing skills. The literacy statistics demonstrate that the Syrian government does not oppose an educated Palestinian refugee population. In fact, as a result of their education, they can be a vital part of the Syrian economy. Palestinian refugee women in particular appear to benefit from their higher levels of education.

As with educational services, UNRWA provides basic health care to the Palestinian refugee population in Syria. There are 23 health centers in Syria in addition to contracts with area hospitals and health centers.<sup>133</sup> Syria offers state-run health care to its citizens, and Palestinian refugees are not excluded from using this healthcare system. Much of the primary care for Palestinian refugees does come via the healthcare offered by UNRWA in the camps. When accessing more comprehensive healthcare outside the camps, there may be a fee associated with more complex procedures, as is the case for Syrian citizens. In order to adequately serve the Palestinian community, UNRWA, Red Crescent, and the Syrian Ministry of Health work together to provide healthcare programs to prevent widespread health concerns.<sup>134</sup> Programs such as these, work to prevent any widespread disease from emerging from the camps. Due to the living conditions in some of the camps, disease could become a major issue in the camps. Proactive programs aim to prevent epidemics. However, while healthcare remains mostly available to Palestinian refugees, like other aspects of camp life, the services available depend on the location of the camps. Rural camp dwellers have less access to health facilities.

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<sup>132</sup> Tiltne, "Keeping Up: A Brief on the Living Conditions of Palestinian Refugees in Syria," 30.

<sup>133</sup> Shafie, *FMO Research Guide: Palestinian Refugees in Syria*, 2.

<sup>134</sup> Tiltne, "Keeping Up: A Brief on the Living Conditions of Palestinian Refugees in Syria," 35.



Fertility rates among Palestinian women in Syria continue to fall. Palestinian women have a lower fertility rate than their Syrian counterparts. The infant mortality rate among Palestinian children continues to improve in Syria. The life expectancy rate among Palestinians in Syria continues to increase.<sup>135</sup> While the Palestinian population in Syria may not be expanding as a result of more children, the Palestinian community remains at a considerable size due to the longer lifespan of the refugees. This added lifespan increases the time that UNRWA and the Syrian government needs to provide services and assistance to the Palestinians in Syria until a peace solution is reached between Israel and the Palestinians. In all, Palestinian refugees in Syria have access to most of the same rights as Syrian citizenship with the exception of actual citizenship. Syria has taken great aims to give the refugee population rights in order to prevent any issue in integration of the Palestinian refugee population.

### **C. ECONOMICS OF THE PALESTINIANS IN SYRIA**

In order to evaluate the impact of the Syrian economy on the treatment of Palestinian refugees, a basic understanding of how the economy works is necessary. The political make-up within Syria influences the economic decisions of the state. The interplay between the Alawi political elite and the Sunni businessmen bears heavily on how the economy works in Syria. Understanding of the politics between these two groups helps better understand economic practices in Syria. While at times the two groups work together towards mutually beneficial aims, often both sides work towards their own interests in an attempt to amass and maintain power in Syria. The Alawis represent a minority of the Syrian population, but they have been able for decades to maintain political power in Syria. They view their brand of authoritarian government as critical to maintaining power. Thus, the Alawi see no significance in enacting any real economic reforms in Syria.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> Tiltne, "Keeping Up: A Brief on the Living Conditions of Palestinian Refugees in Syria," 1517.

<sup>136</sup> Glenn E. Robinson, "Elite Cohesion, Regime Succession and Political Instability in Syria," *Middle East Policy* 5:4 (January 1998), 160.

As previously mentioned, Syria allows Palestinian refugees the ability to work, without requiring work permits. Palestinians may work for the public sector along with Syrian citizens. Since restrictions were placed on property ownership of agricultural land, many of the Palestinians who would have worked in agriculture transitioned to the construction field, due to the relatively unskilled nature of much construction work. Estimates after the initial migration of Palestinians had over half of Palestinians working in Syria in the construction industry.<sup>137</sup> Those figures have changed some as economic conditions changed.

The employment figures of Palestinians speak to the importance of the Palestinians on the Syrian economy. Of the adult Palestinian refugees in camps, 48 percent of the population works. That figure breaks down into a 75 percent male work rate and a 21 percent female work rate. These figures are slightly higher than that of Palestinian refugees in Jordan and Lebanon.<sup>138</sup> Women usually enter the workforce prior to marriage, unless a woman becomes a widow.

The majority of the Palestinian workforce comes from the education, health, and social services sectors. Interestingly, these sectors also offer the highest wages for Palestinian refugees. In order to work in these sectors, Palestinians often must complete higher educational training.<sup>139</sup> The best wages offered to Palestinian refugees in Syria comes not via public sector work from the Syrian government, but from working with UNRWA. UNRWA jobs remain somewhat limited and do require high levels of education.<sup>140</sup> The public sectors still appear to be a legitimate choice for some levels of Palestinians in Syria. Palestinians appear to favor public sector jobs due to the benefits made available via these jobs. Benefits like retirement pensions, paid holiday and sick leave, and subsidized health care make public sector work appealing for higher educated

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<sup>137</sup> Brand, "Palestinians in Syria: The Politics of Integration," 629.

<sup>138</sup> Tiltne, "Keeping Up: A Brief on the Living Conditions of Palestinian Refugees in Syria," 45.

<sup>139</sup> Age A. Tiltne, "Palestinian Refugees in Syria: Human Capital, Economic Resources and Living Conditions," Oslo: Fafo, 2006, 165.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., 163.

Palestinians. Another reason could be the availability of public sector jobs, lower educational requirements, or safety for women to work in this sector.<sup>141</sup>

The ability of Palestinian refugees to be self-employed holds some allure. Rates for self-employment among Palestinian refugees stand around 14 percent of the Palestinian workforce. Men more than women are self-employed. Palestinians in this category more often than not come from a lower educational segment.<sup>142</sup> Palestinians often cite the lack of access to credit to start businesses, as to why they do not start their own businesses.<sup>143</sup> This is an area where the UNRWA programs for micro-financing becomes a factor. UNRWA is able to aid the Palestinian refugees obtain credit to start their own businesses. Thus, UNRWA fills a void left by the Syrian government. Palestinians are able to operate their own businesses can be seen as a positive despite any negatives in the educational availabilities. Overall, Palestinians do not appear to suffer from the inability to find work in Syria.

How does the overall economy of Syria factor into the role of the Palestinian workforce on the economy? The economic health of Syria does impact the treatment of Palestinian refugees to some extent. As the economy of Syria began to decline from its relative health in the 1950s and 1960s, jobs became tougher to come by in Syria. The Syrian population saw another influx of Palestinian refugees from Lebanon during its civil war. The refugees in Lebanon had benefitted from the care given to them by the PLO. The government of Syria was not as apt to give the newer refugees the same rights as the 1948 Palestinian refugees. A group inside Syria made claims that the Palestinian refugees were taking Syrian citizens jobs. The claims were made against the Palestinians despite their minority size in the overall population.<sup>144</sup> No real proof can be seen that the Palestinians take jobs from others in Syria. The claim does persist at times, when

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<sup>141</sup> Tiltmes, "Keeping Up: A Brief on the Living Conditions of Palestinian Refugees in Syria," 51–52 and Tiltmes, "Palestinian Refugees in Syria," 170.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid., 50.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid., 176.

<sup>144</sup> Brand, "Palestinians in Syria: The Politics of Integration," 636.

politically beneficial, that the Palestinians are taking Syria jobs. A claim that does not prove realistic due to the minority levels the Palestinians represent.

Syria's economic situation remains relatively bleak. Yet, the economy of Syria remains the most robust of the UNRWA states. In 2010, Syria's estimated GDP was \$106.4 billion with an estimated 4–5 percent growth from the prior year.<sup>145</sup> An analyst argues that any economic reforms undertaken by the Syrian government could be a threat to the Alawi-led political base in Syria by strengthening the Sunni business elite. He argues further that economic liberalization has not occurred in Syria due to the distrust of the private sector by the leading political Ba'athists. The move towards liberalizing Syria's economy would take profits away from those currently benefitting.<sup>146</sup> The Syrian government, however, has allowed some economic liberalization to occur. The government seeks to implement a more controlled process of economic reform vital to maintaining their balance of power in the economics and politics of Syria.

The Middle East peace process also bears on the treatment of Palestinians due to its potential economic impact in the region. Unlike Jordan, Syria remains without a peace treaty with Israel. The Jordan peace treaty with Israel came about in part due to plans for economic integration between the two states. Syria remains without the potential economic benefit of trade with Israel. In theory, peace between Israel and Syria would signal a move towards regional peace and regional normalization of economic relations. In order to reach a peace and trade agreement, Syria would need to implement economically liberalizing practices.<sup>147</sup> The question remains whether these changes are possible if they do not benefit the Alawi political elite. Peace and economic reforms remain unlikely in the near future without a political change.

The state continues experience the potential to transform with current influences. Influences that include a growing refugee population of not just Palestinian refugees but also Iraqi refugees and turmoil from protestors could lead to economic liberalization.

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<sup>145</sup> Central Intelligence Agency. *World Factbook: Syria*. April 25, 2011. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/sy.html> (accessed May 7, 2011).!

<sup>146</sup> Robinson, "Elite Cohesion, Regime Succession and Political Instability in Syria," 164–165.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, 167.

Syria's economy continues to be taxed by the additional burden of more people needing government assistance. Unlike the neighboring states, Syria strives to remain economically afloat without assistance from the IMF and World Bank. How long this pattern can continue remains to be seen. In order to maintain power, the Alawi political elite continue with economic practices that maintain the status quo—a status quo that allows the Palestinians the right to work with little restriction, while still maintaining the present balance of power.

#### **D. SPACE WITHIN THE STATE AND THE PALESTINIANS IN SYRIA**

The space within the state in Syria factors some into the treatment of the Palestinian refugees in Syria. Since Palestinians are eligible to own property, they do not need to live in camps. Nine official and three unofficial camps are located in Syria.<sup>148</sup> UNRWA estimates that just fewer than 130,000 registered refugees live in the camps, constituting approximately 27 percent of the refugee population of Syria located in camps.<sup>149</sup> In the Syrian camps, most of the homes are fairly basic mud or concrete construction. UNRWA provides for basic services in the camps they run. The Syrian government provides utilities for the camps, but as with other areas in Syria, the water supply can be lacking.<sup>150</sup> Fafo concludes in its 2007 survey on living conditions in the Palestinian refugee camps in Syria that on average the Palestinians in the camps have better access to sanitation services than Syrian citizens, but that the water resources in the camps need to be improved as much as those of the Syrian public. The problem with sanitation and water resources is more profound in the rural camps in Syria.<sup>151</sup> Refugees surveyed noted a general lack of cleanliness in the camps with over half calling them “not so clean” and 13 percent calling the camps dirty or very dirty.<sup>152</sup> The lack of sanitation standards, clean water, and overall cleanliness raises concerns on the general conditions

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<sup>148</sup> UNRWA, “Syria,” 1.

<sup>149</sup> UN Relief and Works Agency, UNRWA in Figures: As of 30 June 2010, [http://www.unrwa.org/userfiles/file/statistics/UNRWA\\_in\\_figuresJune\\_2010\\_English.pdf](http://www.unrwa.org/userfiles/file/statistics/UNRWA_in_figuresJune_2010_English.pdf) (accessed May 7, 2011), 1.

<sup>150</sup> Shafie, *FMO Research Guide: Palestinian Refugees in Syria*, 2.

<sup>151</sup> Tiltne, “Keeping Up: A Brief on the Living Conditions of Palestinian Refugees in Syria,” 22–23.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

of the camps. These conditions could lead to health concerns that would not only impact the Palestinian refugees in the camps, but also the general Syrian population in the area.

The type of dwellings within the Palestinian camps varies significantly from location to location. Size and services available depend on the location of the camps with rural camps offering less livable conditions. Despite the discrepancy between camps, less than 0.5 percent of Palestinian refugees live in squatter dwellings according to a 2007 Fafo survey.<sup>153</sup> UNRWA and GAPAR continue to undertake measures to remedy the poor living conditions in some of the camps around Syria.

The dwellings in the camps consist on average of 70 to 80 square meters per dwelling. Overcrowding plagues the dwelling in Syrian camps less so than that of the Jordanian and Lebanese camps. More often than not, any overcrowding of dwellings comes from the Palestinian refugee families with the lower income.<sup>154</sup> The income of Palestinians within the camps becomes a factor due to the proximity of public transportation in relation to the camps. With less than 10 percent of Palestinian refugees in the camps owning their own transportation, nearby access to public transportation remains imperative.<sup>155</sup> Palestinian refugees use public transportation to access education, employment, and healthcare located outside of the camps. Without the access to transportation, the ability to seek secondary education or vocational training to aid in economic progress rapidly declines. Fafo found this to be true in their survey; they noted four-fifths of the participants noted as the principle negative aspect in relation to their living situation was the lack of real economic opportunities in the area.<sup>156</sup>

As previously mentioned, a majority of the Palestinian refugees reside outside of the UNRWA sponsored camps. Many early refugees reside in Yarmuk, an area often described as camp-like. However, Yarmuk began as an area of land available for Palestinian refugees to establish homes in the early 1950s through the help of the Palestinian Arab Refugee Institution (PARI). The relative impact of space within the

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<sup>153</sup> Tiltne, "Keeping Up: A Brief on the Living Conditions of Palestinian Refugees in Syria," 19.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*, 19–21.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

state remains minimal to the treatment of the Palestinian refugees in Syria. This is due to the significant geographic size of Syria. Also, the laws allowing for Palestinian refugee to live outside the camps make space within the state less of a factor influencing the treatment of the Palestinians.

#### **E. CAMP SECURITY AND THE PALESTINIANS IN SYRIA**

Camp security in Syria will be discussed next in relation to the treatment of Palestinian refugees in Syria. Overall, scholarly work mentions few incidents of violence in the camps of Syria. Like the camp in the neighboring states, the camps in Syria remain a recruiting ground for resistance action. The Vanguard of the Popular War of Liberation or *Sa'iqa* who make up the Palestinian branch of the Syrian Ba'ath Party use the camps as grounds for recruitment. During its primary action post-1967 conflict, the Syrian government assisted in training, weapons, and funding for the group. The group conflicted with then President Hafiz al-Asad's military group. Eventually, the Palestinian branch of the Ba'ath party came under control of a Syrian government approved leader.<sup>157</sup> This instance does demonstrate some issues with camp security, but camp security remains less prevalent an issue than it is in neighboring states. In all, this factor remains one of the less significant factors affecting the treatment of the Palestinians.

#### **F. POLITICS OF THE PALESTINIANS IN SYRIA**

The next major factor influencing the disparity in treatment of the Palestinian refugees in Syria is politics. Much of the political realm of the Palestinians in Syria resides around the relationship between the Syrian government, specifically the Ba'ath Party, and the PLO. Since Palestinian refugees are not afforded the right to vote, their representation in government comes from other sources. It could be argued that even if they could vote, it would not matter due to the authoritarian nature of the state. The relationship between the Syrian government and the PLO has undergone many phases. With the shifting tide in the relationship came legal restrictions in Syria that affect the Palestinians residing in the state.

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<sup>157</sup> Brand, "Palestinians in Syria: The Politics of Integration," 626–627.

The Alawi emerged as a political force with the end of the Mandate period in Syria. The Alawi previously known as the Nusayris stood on the outskirts of Muslim society prior to this period due to the Sunni belief that the group was a sect, often not considered Muslim. Eventually, the more mainstream Shiite community accepted the Alawi. Despite diverging views between the Shiite and Alawi communities an alliance emerged between the two communities that continues today to encompass the Syrian and Iranian relationship.<sup>158</sup> The Alawi political elite and its Ba'ath party factor prevalently into the politics of Syria.

The Ba'ath party aims to shore up support among the Sunni non-elite in Syria. The effort to raise support outside of the elite Sunni landowners became vital for the Alawi political power players to maintain control in politics against the Sunni majority. In order to accomplish this, the Ba'ath party enacted policies that would benefit the rural population and urban public sector workers. By gaining the alliance of the poorer segments of Sunni society, the Alawis have maintained political power.<sup>159</sup> In a similar way, the Alawi political elite has worked to integrate the Palestinian refugee population into Syrian society. This integration process, without full rights, allows the Palestinian population to feel a level of comfort in their situation to prevent any significant political uprising against the Alawi political government.

Despite the fact that Palestinians cannot vote in Syria, governmental organizations began to organize Palestinian youth. A Palestinian Ba'ath organization also emerged in Syria. The government organizations aimed at youth sought to move the political action of the Palestinian constituency in a way to benefit the Ba'ath party. In the same realm, the Palestinian Ba'ath party began a government-endorsed outlet for the Palestinian population's political outlet. While the Syrian government supports the Palestinian resistance movement, they aim to prevent Israeli retaliation into Syria as a result of Palestinian resistance from their lands like incidents in Lebanon and Jordan.<sup>160</sup> Brand

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<sup>158</sup> Yvette Talhamy, "The Syrian Muslim Brothers and the Syrian-Iranian Relationship," *Middle East Journal* 63:4 (Autumn 2009), 562.

<sup>159</sup> Robinson, "Elite Cohesion, Regime Succession and Political Instability in Syria," 159–161.

<sup>160</sup> Brand, "Palestinians in Syria: The Politics of Integration," 624.



contends that *Sa'iqah* remains important in recruiting young Palestinians, but the recruitment means more for the Ba'ath party and not as much for the Palestinian nationalist movement.<sup>161</sup>

During periods of increased Palestinian resistance in the region, Palestinians residing in Syria have experienced periods of difficulty in freedom of travel. Specifically, travel between often war-torn Lebanon and Syria has proved tough during times of increased Palestinian resistance.<sup>162</sup> The intertwined nature of the politics of Syria and Lebanon remain a large part in the political decisions of the Syrian regime. The conflict between Syria and Israel often finds itself manifested through conflict in Lebanon.<sup>163</sup> Thus, political and economic decisions get wrapped up with the affairs of not only Syria but Lebanon as well.

As for peace in the region, Syria remains without a peace agreement with Israel. While ideological issues remain a significant factor in the lack of agreement between the two parties, a principle sticking point in the negotiations revolves around returning of the Golan Heights to Syria and water rights between the two countries. Ideologically, the Ba'ath party remains generally opposed to peace with Israel. Concern continues on the potential detriment to the Alawi regime if a peace deal is reached. Political change could call for more economic change that would eventually undermine the political elite and give more power to the Sunni economic base.<sup>164</sup> Ultimately, the political decisions that affect the Palestinians may actually have little to do with real support of the Palestinian cause by the Syrian government. The true motivation behind these moves appears to be less solidarity with the Palestinian cause and more sheer determination to maintain Alawi political power. The politics of the situation emerge as a vital factor affecting the treatment of Palestinian refugees in Syria.

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<sup>161</sup> Brand, "Palestinians in Syria: The Politics of Integration," 627.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid., 624.

<sup>163</sup> Robinson, "Elite Cohesion, Regime Succession and Political Instability in Syria," 171.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid., 171.

## **G. THE PLO, ISLAMISTS AND THE PALESTINIANS IN SYRIA**

Besides general politics, how have the PLO and Islamist organizations affected the treatment of Palestinian refugees in Syria? Palestinian centered organizations appear to have a minimal impact in Syria. Palestinian refugees in Syria, unlike their counterparts in other states, have been allowed to participate for the most part in Syrian labor and civic organizations. Due to this, few Palestinian organizations have emerged with a strong power.<sup>165</sup> The organizations in Syria rise primarily to support the greater Palestinian cause, but they are not generally established to combat poor treatment of the Palestinian refugees.

Paramount to the Syrian and Palestinian dynamic is the relationship between the Syrian government and the PLO. The groups have both worked together and worked in opposition with each other at times. The Syrian intervention in the Lebanese civil war and the Syrian intervention with the conflict in Jordan in Black September serve as two strikingly different examples of the Syrian government and PLO's interaction. Ultimately, both instances resulted in the PLO being expelled from the country in conflict. In the case of Lebanon, Syria was able to exert additional hegemonic power in the fragile country. In the case of Jordan, Syria aided the Palestinian resistance movement, but the PLO was ultimately expelled from Jordan.

Another major factor in the relationship between the Syrian government and the PLO revolves around their views on a peace deal with Israel. The PLO becoming the primary negotiator on the Palestinians' behalf was met with concern by the UNRWA states. Syria had its own conflict with Israel over the disputed Golan Heights. Unlike Jordan, Syria has been unable to negotiate a peace deal with Israel. The Syrian government under the Asad regimes has often viewed the PLO as too willing to negotiate from unfavorable ground with the Israelis.<sup>166</sup> With the death of Hafiz al-Asad in 2000, a peace deal between Syria and Israel remained incomplete. While some speculated that

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<sup>165</sup> Brand, "Palestinians in Syria: The Politics of Integration," 628.

<sup>166</sup> Helena Cobban, "The PLO and the *Intifada*," *Middle East Journal* 44:2 (Spring 1990), 212, 231.

Islamists in Syria would use the death of Asad to attempt to gain political control of Syria that reality did not occur. The Alawi political power remained intact when Bashar al-Asad took over for his father.

One such group that hoped to emerge with more power after the death of Hafiz al-Asad was the Muslim Brothers. The Brothers oppose what they see as the secularization of Syrian society by the Alawi political elite by the Ba'ath Party. In part, these conflicts led to the original ban on the Muslim Brothers in Syria in 1964.<sup>167</sup> The cries of secularization appeared to be confirmed in the 1970s when the Asad regime did not name Islam as the official religion of Syria in the new constitution. The omission was later remedied when law required the president to practice Islam. However, some Sunni did not consider the Alawi of whom President Asad was a member to be true Muslims. Proclamations from various high-ranking Shiite designated the Alawi as a Muslim sect in the mid-1970s, but these declarations of the Alawi as true Muslims did not end the conflict between the Sunni Muslim Brothers and the Alawi political elite.<sup>168</sup> The conflict between the Islamist group and the Alawi regime was not the only issue for the Asad regime.

The Syrian government maintained a strict stance against Israel. Through Assad's negative dealings with the West, other Arab countries also distanced themselves from the Syrian regime. In order to obtain an ally in the region, the Syrian state formed a tighter alliance with the Shiite regime from Iran. In conjunction with the Syrian-Iranian relationship came other allies close to the Palestinian cause. The Sunni-led Palestinian Islamic Jihad and the Shiite Hezbollah from Lebanon. Both groups also had strong ties to Iran and spoke out for the Palestinian cause. Through these alliances, the Syrian Alawi government attempted to demonstrate they had the Palestinian cause as a priority. Other Arab states in the region questioned the motivation behind the alliances.<sup>169</sup> The other Sunni Arab states in the region had long acted as advocates for the Sunni Palestinian population. States such as Egypt and Jordan have peace deals with Israel in place. The

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<sup>167</sup> Talhamy, "The Syrian Muslim Brothers and the Syrian-Iranian Relationship," 565.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid., 566–567.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid., 569.

secular PLO was recognized as the principal negotiator on the Palestinians behalf. The Syrian-Iranian agenda often questions the tactics and concession of the PLO negotiations.

Despite the Ba'ath championing of the Palestinian cause, the Islamist Muslim Brothers still viewed the Ba'ath regime as repressive in Syria, and questioned their alliance with the Shiite Iran and Hezbollah.<sup>170</sup> The alliance with Iran and Hezbollah did not appear to bring Syria any closer to a peace agreement with Israel. In fact, the Ba'ath regime continued to reject any real negotiations with the Israelis. Some, including the Syrian Muslim Brothers, fear that Syria acts according to the will of Iran and not necessarily the will of Syria first. Since the Shiite powers Syria, Iran, and Hezbollah continue to state their devotion to the Palestinian cause it became harder and harder for other groups to counter those claims with calls for secular peace negotiations that appear to illicit few results. The motives of the Syrian Alawi political elite can definitely be questioned as to their supporting the Palestinian cause. However, until the other side makes real progress towards a peace deal, it is understandable why the Palestinian refugee population in Syria remains relatively un-mobilized towards nationalistic tendencies. Without gross mistreatment by the state government, the Palestinian refugees in Syria remain fairly integrated with most civic rights and services available to them. Thus, Islamist groups have been unable to encourage mobilization in opposition to the Syrian government. Outside Islamist groups like Hezbollah have championed the Palestinian cause. Also, the Syria-Iran alliance aims to show their support of the Palestinian cause. Until overt action demonstrates that their support of the Palestinian cause comes from impure motives, they appear to have the support of the Palestinian population in Syria in at least the Palestinians' lack of mobilization inside Syria. Again the politics of the Syrian government's actions with the PLO and Islamist organizations appear to center less on aiding the Palestinian people and more on maintaining political clout.

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<sup>170</sup> Talhamy, "The Syrian Muslim Brothers and the Syrian-Iranian Relationship," 573.

## **H. IDENTITY OF THE PALESTINIANS IN SYRIA**

The factor of identity in influencing the treatment of Palestinian refugees in Syria, as in other states, revolves around the right of return and integration into the state. Brand contends that Syria enacted significant integration policies in part to prevent any significant Palestinian nationalist groups from emerging in Syria.<sup>171</sup> The ability to work in Syria without a list of banned professions like other neighboring countries allows for Palestinian refugees to live in communities outside the camps. This ability aids the integration of the Palestinian refugees into the Syrian state. The identity of Palestinians in Syria, due to their relatively low numbers in relation to the Syrian population and ability to live and work in communities, facilitates the integration and prevents significant resistance movements from occurring. Ultimately, Brand contends that the Syrian government may restrict outward expressions in general, but they have always attempted to allow for some expression of Palestinian identity.<sup>172</sup> The lack of Sunni Palestinian resistance also prevents an alliance of the Palestinians with the Sunni business elite. The potential of such alliance could spell trouble for the Alawi political power of Syria.

Despite relative integration, the Palestinians in Syria remain proud of their Palestinian identity. Their lack of Syrian citizenship stands as a reminder that the Palestinian population is separate from the Syrian population. The right of return continues to be a significant sticking point in the Arab-Israeli peace negotiations. The Palestinian refugee population as a whole continues to maintain that right of return is paramount to a peace deal with Israel and also to their overall identity as Palestinians. The general attitude towards refugee integration began with the Palestinian refugee migration of 1948. At the time of the flood of refugees into Syria, the Syrian economy unlike those of neighboring Lebanon and Jordan was relatively stable. The refugees entered and still only made up a slight minority in the country. The population of

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<sup>171</sup> Brand, "Palestinians in Syria: The Politics of Integration," 622.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid., 632.

Palestinians to this day only makes up two to three percent of the population.<sup>173</sup> Thus, at the time of the original refugee situation, Syria put into place policies to integrate the Palestinian refugees with the same rights as Syrian citizens with the exception of citizenship. The reasoning often given as to why citizenship is not offered to the Palestinians in Syria is maintaining right of return.

Syria must deal with their growing refugee population, comprised not just of Palestinian refugees. More and more refugees are entering Syria due to conflict in the region, whether that conflict is in Iraq, Lebanon due to ongoing conflict with Israel, or other areas in the region.<sup>174</sup> The state must look at the policies in place and make necessary changes. At this time, the current policies in place may be beneficial for the Palestinian population, but growing unrest and discontent over access to services being harder to come by for Syrian citizens will only make an already precarious situation tougher.

This chapter examined the principal factors that influence the treatment of Palestinians in Syria. Though the evaluation, the importance of the difference between the Sunni-majority population and the Alawi political power in Syria emerged as an aspect that colored all factors. In the end, the factor of politics emerged as critical in the treatment of Palestinian refugees in Syria. The alliances the Syrian government formed with other Shiite partners dramatically affects the choices made by the Syrian government. Additionally, the need for economic and political partners in the region in part has led to these Shiite alliances. Through the analysis of the factors, the reality that the true reason behind the treatment of Palestinian refugees in Syria is political, but not necessarily because of a desire to really support the Palestinian cause. Instead, the real motivation in the treatment of the Palestinian refugees in Syria revolves around the Alawi desire to maintain political authority. This desire to maintain power can also be seen in the state's willingness to allow the Palestinians to integrate economically. The government of Syria wants to maintain the current economic balance between the Alawi

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<sup>173</sup> Brand, "Palestinians in Syria: The Politics of Integration," 622.

<sup>174</sup> al-Khalidi, Hoffman, and Tanner, "Iraqi Refugees in the Syrian Arab Republic: A Field Based Snapshot," 40.

political elite and the Sunni business elite. The current integration of the Palestinians does not disrupt that balance. In the end, the state's desire to maintain their authoritarian reign without real political or economic reforms impacts the treatment the Palestinians receive in Syria.

#### **IV. PALESTINIAN REFUGEES JORDAN: ALTERNATE THEORIES FOR DISPARITY IN TREATMENT**

Of the three countries under the UNRWA banner, Jordan hosts the most Palestinian refugees. As of January 2010, UNRWA statistics noted just over 1.9 million registered refugees in Jordan. Of that significant number of refugees, only about 340,000 of those refugees live in one of the ten camps in Jordan.<sup>175</sup> While Jordan does afford the Palestinians within its borders more rights than they are afforded in other UNRWA-sponsored states, the Palestinians residing in Jordan may in name be Jordanian, but still in many cases view themselves as Palestinian first. The Jordanian government continues to walk a fine line between integrating the Palestinians into their society and keeping them Palestinian first and Jordanian second.

To understand what factors influence the treatment of Palestinians in Jordan, a brief historical overview of the Palestinians role in Jordan is necessary. This chapter presents the factors that elucidate the treatment of the Palestinians in Jordan. First, what is the legal status of the Palestinians in Jordan? Does citizenship make the Palestinians situation in Jordan easier? What type of civic rights are they afforded? Next, how do the economics of Jordan impact the treatment of the Palestinians? With published records of registered refugees so high and estimates of non-Palestinian Jordanian citizens at a near equal number, to what extent does the Jordanian economy need the Palestinians? How does the space within the relatively small state impact treatment of the Palestinians? Camps do not initially appear to be as much of a factor, but does that cursory estimate hold true? The politics of Jordan in relation to the Palestinian refugees will also be examined. Are the Islamists as significant a factor in Jordan as in other states? How did the expulsion of the PLO factor into the politics of Jordan? Finally, how do the Palestinians within Jordan identify themselves? With the West Bank no longer under Jordanian control, how should the Palestinians with Jordanian citizenship but residing in the West Bank factor into this discussion? Upon completion of this appraisal into the

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<sup>175</sup> UN World Refugee Agency, UNRWA in Figures: As of 1 January 201, <http://www.unrwa.org/userfiles/20100628261.pdf> (accessed September 3, 2010), 1.



treatment of the Palestinians in Jordan, economic factors rise as the paramount factor in the treatment of the refugees. The economic conditions in Jordan make integration of the Palestinians into the job market critical to Jordan's economic success. The state realizes the sheer volume of the Palestinian's economic contribution preserves Jordan's economic livelihood. The politics of Jordan also emerge as a secondarily significant factor in how Jordan treats the Palestinians. The authoritarian nature of the regime has allowed for the treatment of the Palestinians to remain at a level below the rest of the Jordanian population. The regime understands that maintaining the current level of integration allows them to remain in power. The state fears that changes in Palestinian integration could lead to a destabilization in the current balance of power.

#### **A. HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE PALESTINIANS IN JORDAN**

The history of the Palestinians in Jordan is multi-faceted. The history could go back to prior to the state formation of Israel. Some Israelis presently argue that there is no real difference between a Jordanian and a Palestinian. The narrative of some in Israel continues that the true home of the Palestinians is Jordan. However, the contemporary narrative of Palestinian refugees in Jordan begins at the end of the 1948 war. At the end of the conflict, approximately 70,000 refugees entered into the East Bank of Jordan. Add this to the approximately 440,000 Palestinians that lived on the West Bank prior to the conflict and the additional 280,000 Palestinians that migrated to the West Bank after the conflict, the number of Palestinians within what would become Jordan rose exponentially.<sup>176</sup> Much of the narrative of Palestinians focuses on the narrative of the East and West Bank Jordanian. Upon the influx of Palestinian refugees, the Hashemite government of Jordan granted citizenship to the Palestinians. Clear figures on the number of Palestinians in Jordan are unavailable due to frequent movement between the East and West Bank making official registration difficult, and the government's reluctance to provide population data. Many estimate that the Palestinian population within Jordan constitutes more than half the citizens of Jordan.

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<sup>176</sup> Laurie A. Brand, "Palestinians and Jordanians: A Crisis of Identity." *Journal of Palestinian Studies* 24:4 (Summer 1995): 47.

Despite granting of citizenship rights to the Palestinian refugees, the relationship between the Palestinians and the rest of the Jordanian population has not always been peaceful. In 1948 after the formation of the state of Israel, Jordan did not support the formation of an independent government for the Palestinians. King Abdullah of Jordan lobbied that the area known as the West Bank, should be part of Jordan. Through talks in Jericho in 1948, Abdullah persuaded the other nations in the Arab League to support Jordan's annexation of the West Bank and the holy city of Jerusalem.

Another significant event for the Palestinians in Jordan is Black September. This event will receive more attention later in the chapter. This significant event was a conflict between Palestinian activist groups within Jordan backed by the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and elements of the Jordanian and Israeli governments. This violence, conducted from inside Jordan by PLO sponsored activities against the Israelis, strained the relations between the Jordanian government and its Palestinian population. The violent events led to further conflict within Jordan and the eventual expulsion of the PLO from Jordan.

An additionally important moment in the Jordanian and Palestinian relationship came in 1988, when King Hussein relinquished Jordan's claim to the West Bank and withdrew Jordanian citizenship from the residents of the West Bank.<sup>177</sup> The denouncing of the West Bank, as no longer part of Jordan, added to the complex relationship between the Palestinians and Jordanians with the Palestinian refugees of the West Bank now deemed people of the Occupied Territories. This left them with no legal status of citizenship from Jordan. These three events are only a few that shape the Palestinian-Jordanian relationship. They stand as an overview of the relationship between the Palestinians and the state.

## **B. LEGAL STATUS OF THE PALESTINIANS IN JORDAN**

The first factor to be developed to analyze the treatment of Palestinian refugees in Jordan is the legal status afforded to the Palestinians. Unlike Lebanon and Syria, the

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<sup>177</sup> Human Rights Watch, *Jordan: Stop Withdrawing Nationality From Palestinian-Origin Citizens*, February 1, 2010, <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4b6aba291c.html> (accessed August 26, 2010), 1.

Palestinian refugees in Jordan have citizenship. Despite the fact that Palestinians within the borders of Jordan have citizenship, this does not mean that they have access to the same rights as a non-Palestinian Jordanian citizen. Due various political situations in the Middle East, not all Palestinians who once enjoyed Jordanian citizenship have been allowed to maintain their citizenship. This topic of loss of citizenship will be explored further later in this chapter. Overall, Palestinians in Jordan hold more legal rights than Palestinians in other UNRWA-sponsored states.

In relation to the 1965 Casablanca Protocol adopted by the League of Arab States concerning the Palestinian refugees, Jordan accepts the proposal as a signor without reservations. This adoption of the Casablanca Protocol calls for rights for the Palestinians to retain their identity as Palestinians, while still receiving rights on par with other Jordanian citizens. The protocol specifies that Palestinians should have the right to move in and out of Jordan without hindrance. Additionally, the Casablanca Protocol calls for Palestinians to have travel documents that can be renewed without hassle. These documents should be no different from travel documents of any other citizen from an Arab League state.<sup>178</sup> The principle behind this protocol was to offer the Palestinians their own identity, while maintaining rights for the Palestinian people within the countries in which they resided. While not all members of the League of Arab States accepted the protocol, and some did so with reservations, Jordan signed on to the protocol without reservations. Jordan appears as a state that sought to grant rights to the Palestinians close to on par with its own citizens. Later examination will show that these rights do not mean that Palestinians really enjoy the same treatment as the rest of the Jordanian population.

Jordan employs a system with various categories to identify what legal rights the Palestinians receive. Many of the legal rights the Palestinians receive are based on their registration with UNRWA. Like in other parts of the Levant, the Palestinian refugees need to be registered with UNRWA to be eligible for benefits. Papers are given to the

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<sup>178</sup> League of Arab States, *Protocol for the Treatment of Palestinians in Arab States: "Casablanca Protocol,"* September 11, 1965, <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/460a2b252.html> (accessed August 26, 2010), 1.

Palestinians to indicate their legal status. The papers range from Jordanian to Palestinian passports that may be temporary with strict renewal procedures. Some Palestinian refugees may have a family book that registers the status of the members of a family to include births, marriages, and deaths. The registration papers also note the type work allowed for the Palestinian. An additionally important document is the family reunification card that allows for a person to transit between another place and Jordan to be reunited with family.<sup>179</sup>

The time period of migration is another vital factor in determining the legal status of Palestinian refugees. Rights are determined through a categorization of refugees from the 1948 conflict versus the 1967 conflict. Palestinians from the 1948 conflict are considered refugees, and if resided in Jordan after the conflict, are given rights as Jordanian citizens. However, the Palestinians from the 1967 conflict are in many cases considered Internally Displaced Persons (IDP's) and do not constitute refugee status under the UN guidelines. They do not have access to the rights of the UNRWA camps, and in many cases they are stateless without citizenship including Jordanian.

One segment of the Palestinian refugee population is Palestinian refugees with Jordanian citizenship but residing outside of Jordan. Many Palestinians left Jordan to seek employment opportunities outside of Jordan. Various conflicts in the region, however, precipitated a return of these refugees to Jordan. With the expulsion of Palestinian refugees from other Middle East countries, Palestinians with Jordanian citizenship returned to Jordan in some cases with no real ties to Jordan except their passports. This influx of people led in part to more restrictive rules on returning to Jordan for citizenship or passport renewal. In February 2010, Human Rights Watch warned this group of Palestinians is especially susceptible to withdrawal of their Jordanian citizenship.<sup>180</sup> These Palestinian refugees maintained Jordanian citizenship while working abroad, but the possibility of losing citizenship and becoming stateless again

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<sup>179</sup> Oroub Al Abed, FMO Research Guide: Palestinian Refugees in Jordan. February 2004, <http://www.forcedmigration.org/guides/fmo025/fmo025.pdf> (accessed April 2, 2011), 9–11.

<sup>180</sup> Human Rights Watch, *Jordan: Stop Withdrawing Nationality From Palestinian-Origin Citizens*, 1.

became a real fear. With no citizenship, travel and employment becomes a difficult undertaking for Palestinians without proper travel or identification documents.

The loss of Jordanian citizenship remains a concern for Palestinians within Jordan, especially those considered West Bank Palestinians. Between 2004 and 2008, the government of Jordan took away citizenship from over 2,700 Palestinians. Human Rights Watch concludes that the removal of citizenship from these Palestinians came through the random application of laws. Much of the confusion appears to center around laws between the Jordanian and Israeli governments. The arbitrary application of these residency laws complicates the renewal processes for passports facilitating errors and creating reasons for the Jordanian government to revoke citizenship rights.<sup>181</sup> Palestinian refugees in Jordan need citizenship rights to have access to state provided health and education services.

Concerns over gender discrimination, factor into the legal rights of Palestinians. Women of Jordanian citizenship are unable to pass on their citizenship rights. If a Jordanian woman is married to a non-citizen Palestinian, the husband's citizenship rights define her children. The children fall into the stateless category. The process for the Palestinian man to apply for citizenship, if married to a Jordanian citizen woman, takes 15 years of permanent residency with additional time for processing of the application.<sup>182</sup> Thus, the Palestinian refugees in Jordan face real fears of losing their citizenship or passing their Jordanian citizenship on to their children after marriage. Current laws exhibit a real bias towards Jordanian citizens of a non-Palestinian descent.

Education is another important legal factor in the treatment of the Palestinians. Palestinians with Jordanian citizenship are able to use the Jordanian education system. Those within the camps have access to basic education through UNRWA. Palestinians without passports, however, must pay for education as if they were foreigners. Due to this restriction, many Palestinians without camp registration or passports find

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<sup>181</sup> Human Rights Watch, *Jordan: Stop Withdrawing Nationality From Palestinian-Origin Citizens*, 1.

<sup>182</sup> Brad K. Blitz, "Statelessness, Protection, and Equality," In *Forced Migration Policy Briefing 3*, Oxford, England: Refugee Study Centre, September 2009, 14.

continuation of education to be extremely difficult and costly.<sup>183</sup> The fact that the Palestinian refugees in Jordan do have access to education outside the camps is a significant benefit over Palestinians in Lebanon.

Work permits are not necessary for the Palestinians. Jordan allows the Palestinian population to gain employment on par with the non-Jordanian population. This aspect of rights granted to the Palestinian refugee population is vital to understanding the overall importance of the Palestinians to the state of Jordan. Due to the significant numbers of Palestinians within Jordan, logically they make up a large sector of the workforce. Palestinians have found much success in the private sector in Jordan. While some public sector jobs are open to Palestinians, a majority of public sector work goes to Jordanian citizens of non-Palestinian descent. The topic of employment and the Palestinian refugees' impact on the Jordanian economy is developed further in the economic section of this chapter.

Finally, the last major legal factor in the treatment of the Palestinians is the ability to own property. The right to own property in Jordan is given only to Palestinians with valid passports.<sup>184</sup> Like other UNRWA states, there are refugee camps in Jordan for a segment of the Palestinian refugee population. The ability for the Palestinian refugees to own property significantly cuts down on the need for refugees to live in the camps. Overall, the Palestinian refugees in Jordan receive legal rights equal to the rest of the Jordanian population. They may obtain citizenship, seek education, and own property. To better understand the factors that affect their treatment, a more comprehensive look at the other factors is necessary.

### **C. ECONOMICS OF THE PALESTINIANS IN JORDAN**

How do the Palestinian refugees impact the economics within Jordan? The economics of Jordan are greatly influenced by the significant number of Palestinian refugees residing in Jordan. The Jordanian government has instituted policies throughout

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<sup>183</sup> Al Abed, *FMO Research Guide: Palestinian Refugees in Jordan*, 17.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

the last few decades that affect the Palestinians role in the Jordanian economy. The various policies, such as the East Bank first policy, and various moves in the 1990s towards privatization in the Jordanian economy, will be examined in order to ascertain the impact of the Palestinian refugee population on the Jordanian economy.

The East Banker first campaign of the 1970s aimed to formulate a division between the public and private sectors after the events of Black September.<sup>185</sup> Jordanian East Bankers became vital to the public sector including the army, police, and intelligence forces. This exclusion of Palestinians in lieu of the East Bank Jordanians in the public sector forced the Palestinians to forge a role for themselves in the private sector. Some moves have been made to remedy the divide between the public and private sector. The military ended its conscription policy in 1992. The military remains a mostly Transjordanian, especially concerning the soldiers that guard the monarchy.<sup>186</sup> Integration has occurred in some areas of the Jordanian economy. The authoritarian regime, however, has maintained control over areas of the job market that directly aid in their control of the state.

Much of Jordan's internal economy is propped up by its bureaucratic welfare system. The state doled out support and access to public employment to segments of the population helpful to the political wellbeing of the state. This method for provision of subsidies allows the public and private sector to be divided by ethnic persuasion.<sup>187</sup> The state's attempts to aid the East Bankers economically, in an effort to maintain their support, has created a division in the state. This division intensified when the state support that the East Bankers depended on was cut due to economic liberalization policies. The Palestinians established in the private sector did not feel the impact of the policies as profoundly as the East Bankers. That social base, that for years had firmly supported the state, began to protest that the state did not have their best interest in mind

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<sup>185</sup> Laurie A. Brand, "Palestinians and Jordanians: A Crisis of Identity," *Journal of Palestinian Studies* 24, 4 (Summer 1995): 56.

<sup>186</sup> Curtis Ryan, "We Are All Jordan," *Middle East Report Online*, July 13, 2010. <http://www.merip.org/mero/mero071310.html> (accessed November 9, 2010), 3.

<sup>187</sup> Anne Marie Baylouny, *Privatizing Welfare in the Middle East: Kin Mutual Aid Associations in Jordan and Lebanon* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2010), 51.

with economic reforms. The welfare system served as a prime method for enforcing the division of Jordan by ethnic groups. A division of ethnic groups, that has proven political useful for the authoritarian regime of Jordan. The state remains able to elicit support through its distribution of state aid. When reforms have jeopardized this aid, the support for the monarchy has been in peril. The monarchy recognizes that it needs to liberalize while not implementing too many policies that could cut off its political support.

Palestinians in Jordan continue to make up a significant portion of the economy, despite restrictive policies aimed to prop up the Jordanian populace. This was especially true starting in the 1970s when many in the Palestinian population went to the Gulf oil states for work, which resulted in huge amounts of money being sent back into Jordan.<sup>188</sup> These rents constituted a vital piece of the Jordanian economy. The Jordanian economy felt a profound impact when the rents later began to dry up.

In an attempt to handle growing economic problems, the Jordanian government sought to disengage from the West Bank. The state expected the disengagement would result in an improved economic situation for East Bankers. The government hoped to improve the economic outlook of the state by no longer paying the salaries of West Bank employees. The government would not need to provide financially for the few development projects in the West Bank. Instead, the disengagement from the West Bank led to even tougher economic conditions in Jordan. Palestinians residing in the East Bank began to fear for their citizenship rights. As a result, Palestinians with significant financial assets began to pull their money from Jordanian banks. This led to a profound crash of the Jordanian *dinar*.<sup>189</sup> Again, the Jordanian government felt the economic impact of the Palestinians. Repeatedly, the Jordanian state appears to seek a quick economic fix at the expense of the Palestinians. The bank withdrawal illustration shows the importance of Palestinian capital in the overall Jordanian economy.

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<sup>188</sup> Brand, "Palestinians and Jordanians: A Crisis of Identity," 48.

<sup>189</sup> Laurie A. Brand, "Economic and Political Liberalization in a Rentier Economy: The Case of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan," in *Privatization and Liberalization in the Middle East*, eds. Iliya Harik and Denis J. Sullivan, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1992, 183–184.



The fallout from perceived Jordanian support of the regime of Saddam Hussein in the 1991 Gulf crisis led to tough economic times in Jordan. The expulsion of Palestinian workers in Kuwait resulted in an influx returning. The flood of approximately 200,000 people returning strained Jordan's already precarious economy. Inflation became a concern as the unemployment rate rose, state services became overwhelmed, and basic food and housing became limited.<sup>190</sup> With housing so limited, approximately ten percent of these "returnees" as they were called were forced to enter the crowded and poor refugee camps.<sup>191</sup> The previously policies aimed at promoting a separate East Bank identity contributed to the Palestinians' firm hold on the private sector. The influx of people after the Gulf crisis began to stress the state's public sector. The stress of the public sector contributed to policies put in place by the regime to restrict rights to the Palestinians. The monarchy understands the patronage system of public services shores up their tribal support that enables them to maintain their current balance of power.

The Jordanian government began a process of political and economic liberalization in 1989. Their economy lagged behind their Gulf oil state neighbors. In an effort to revitalize the economy, the government implemented liberalization measures, which one observer labeled "defensive democratization."<sup>192</sup> The economy of Jordan relies heavily on rents received from citizens employed outside Jordan, including many Palestinians employed in oil producing states. Beyond just the expatriate remittances, the Jordanian economy began to rely on locational rents that it received for pipeline crossage and transit fees. A considerable amount of the rents came from the basing fees and foreign aid from Western allies.<sup>193</sup> Rentier economies, such as Jordan's, rely on the rents in lieu of taxing their citizens a larger amount. Prior to the 1990s, Jordan enjoyed steady rents from neighboring Arab countries. With the absence of rents coming in, Jordan needed a solution to its fiscal problems. Jordan turned to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for help in alleviating their economic issues.

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<sup>190</sup> Brand, "Palestinians and Jordanians: A Crisis of Identity," 56.

<sup>191</sup> Al Abed, "FMO Research Guide: Palestinian Refugees in Jordan," 9.

<sup>192</sup> Robinson, "Defensive Democratization in Jordan," 387.

<sup>193</sup> Brand, "Economic and Political Liberalization in a Rentier Economy," 168.

The IMF demanded that Jordan make significant changes to its economic practices to receive assistance. These changes came through vast cuts to public expenditures and increased taxes.<sup>194</sup> Separating the public and private sectors in Jordan proved not so easy. The government felt that propping up the private sector with capital would aid in economic recovery. The economic plan in November 1986 was two-fold: increase incentive for the private sector and offer previously public services for sale to the private sector.<sup>195</sup> Cuts to public subsidies came at the expense of the East Bankers due to their considerable number in public service. The economic squeeze on the East Bankers caused friction between them and the Palestinians. In lieu of an adding an income tax, a sales tax was implemented to aid in economic recovery. The state's base felt that a sales tax would be less of an economic burden. The added cost to basic provisions, however, cases a more significant burden to the citizens.<sup>196</sup>

Another aspect of economic creativity during this period can be seen in Jordan's "expatriate conferences." The goal of these conferences was to get more rents from expatriates, especially Palestinians working in the Gulf oil states. The state's hope of revitalizing the rents from Palestinians living abroad came during a time of improved relations between the state and the PLO. In February 1985 after a summit in Fez, Morocco, the Jordanian government and the PLO released a joint communication stating they would work together to achieve a peace settlement in the Middle East.<sup>197</sup> The Jordanian government used the opportunity of renewed Palestinian and Jordanian relations to elicit rents from expatriate Palestinians for economic gain. These actions once again reinforced the state's dependence on the Palestinians for economic bailout.

Jordan eventually experienced economic turn-around with IMF assistance. By 1994, the fastest growing economy in the Middle East belonged to Jordan. The progress slowed, however, by the mid-1990s during more IMF mandated reforms. The oft referred to bread riots occurred in 1996 when mandated reforms ended subsidies for

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<sup>194</sup> Robinson, "Defensive Democratization in Jordan," 389.

<sup>195</sup> Brand, "Economic and Political Liberalization in a Rentier Economy," 172-173.

<sup>196</sup> Baylouny, *Privatizing Welfare in the Middle East*, 57.

<sup>197</sup> Brand, "Economic and Political Liberalization in a Rentier Economy," 176.

bread rapidly inflating prices. The riots also centered on the newly expanded trade between Israel and Jordan.<sup>198</sup> Some economic reforms had taken hold and improved Jordan's overall economy. However, these benefits were not trickling down to a large segment of the population. The government had expected the loss of basic subsidies during this time to rally the Palestinians against the reforms. Groups that usually backed the regime were the ones taking part in these riots.<sup>199</sup> Support was not widespread for an increased trade relationship with Israel. The political ramifications of a trade relationship with Israel appeared too much for some Jordanians. The reforms mandated by the IMF still appeared to hit the East Bankers harder, creating further tensions in the state. This concerned the authoritarian regime that hoped for an economic turn-around, but did not want to lose their support base.

Current tensions continue between the East Bank and Palestinian populations of Jordan. A frequent question asked is, if free trade and peace can work together to improve Jordan's economy? Much of the discussion on the economics of Jordan centers around the U.S.'s role in shaping Jordan's economic future. Since the early 1990s, the US has taken a renewed role in monitoring and shaping the economic practices of Jordan. The US uses the mechanisms of the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) and the Middle East Free Trade Area (MEFTA) for policies relating to the economics of Jordan. Through these apparatuses, the US aims to aid the private sector, encourage free trade agreements in the region, promote free trade zones, and offers aid to the economy of Jordan.<sup>200</sup>

Also vital to understanding Jordan's economic situation is the impact of the Israel-Jordan Peace Treaty. Jordan signed a peace treaty with Israel in 1994. The treaty called for a normalization of relations between the states. This normalization included beginning a diplomatic relationship. Article 7 of the treaty establishes the pattern for economic relations between Jordan and Israel. The treaty notes the importance of

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<sup>198</sup> Robinson, "Defensive Democratization in Jordan," 406.

<sup>199</sup> Baylouny, *Privatizing Welfare in the Middle East*, 47.

<sup>200</sup> Peter W. Moore, "The Newest Jordan: Free Trade, Peace and an Ace in the Hole," *Middle East Online* (June 26, 2003): 1–2.

economic interaction between the states in order to maintain peace and security.<sup>201</sup> The new economic interaction between Jordan and Israel aimed to promote a freedom for economic integration between the states leading to additional economic interaction in the region.

The impact of the Palestinian population emerges as the most significant factor influencing the treatment of Palestinian refugees in Jordan. The economic policies the Jordanian government undertakes often mirror the current political cohesiveness between the state and the Palestinians. Due to their sheer numbers in the Jordanian workforce, the Palestinian refugees constitute a vital segment of the Jordanian economic situation. The regime understands that they need the Palestinians for economic survival. The survival of the authoritarian regime's support, however, depends on maintaining their East Bank support. This support at times has wavered when economic liberalization policies appeared to benefit the Palestinians at the expense of the East Bankers. The state bases its economic policies towards the Palestinians, in an effort to maintain its political livelihood.

#### **D. SPACE WITHIN THE STATE AND THE PALESTINIANS IN JORDAN**

The vast number of Palestinians factors into the space within the state. The exact number of Palestinians remains disputed. The number of Palestinians within Jordan was significant after the 1948 conflict. Their numbers again grew in 1967 and after the original Gulf conflict. The 1967 conflict resulted in approximately 250,000 Palestinians entering into Jordan.<sup>202</sup> Many Palestinians reside in the urban areas alongside the East Bankers. A vast majority of private sector work is found in the urban areas. The Palestinians who make up a significant portion of the private sector base themselves in urban areas near Amman. The Palestinians do not heavily populate the rural areas of Jordan. The camps are also located near the urban areas where a majority of Palestinians

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<sup>201</sup> "Israel and Jordan: Peace Treaty," October 26, 1994, *The Israel-Arab Reader*, Seventh Edition: 482-483.

<sup>202</sup> Laurie A. Brand, "Palestinians and Jordanians: A Crisis of Identity," *Journal of Palestinian Studies* 24, 4 (Summer 1995): 53

live.<sup>203</sup> Palestinians have located near where they can find jobs. They have found that more work in the private sector is available for them near the urban areas, and they have located themselves accordingly.

The number of Palestinian refugees residing in camps is not as significant in Jordan as in other UNRWA states. This is due in part to the Palestinians ability to own property in Jordan. Those that are able to own their own homes do so optimally in areas where employment can be sought. The need to live near employment accounts for the overcrowding of the capital, Amman. The state appears to be able to support the Palestinians despite the geographic size of the state.

#### **E. CAMP SECURITY AND THE PALESTINIANS IN JORDAN**

A minority of Palestinians resides within the camps. UNRWA runs the refugee camps within Jordan since the early 1950s. Ten official UNRWA sponsored camps currently exist in Jordan. UNRWA established six of those camps after the 1967 conflict as an emergency response to the staggering number of Palestinians displaced. The Jordanian government sponsors three unofficial camps.<sup>204</sup> Current UNRWA estimates maintain that 17.2 percent of registered refugees reside in camps.<sup>205</sup> Camps are only open to UNRWA registered Palestinians. Thus, many Palestinians within Jordan cannot live in the camps. They live in other areas in the city like squatter settlements. Jordan has an estimated 54 squatter settlements.<sup>206</sup> These Palestinians do not receive the basic services provided in the camps. This segment of the population lacks the legal standing to receive subsidies from UNRWA or the state resulting in a large social problem. These Palestinians are without basic human services like health care, food relief, job assistance, and basic education. Generally, camp security remains a less significant factor affecting the Palestinians' treatment. Overcrowding and unsanitary conditions exist in the camps.

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<sup>203</sup> Baylouny, *Privatizing Welfare in the Middle East*, 81.

<sup>204</sup> Al Abed, FMO Research Guide: Palestinian Refugees in Jordan," 12–13.

<sup>205</sup> UN World Refugee Agency. *UNRWA in Figures: As of 1 January 2010*. <http://www.unrwa.org/userfiles/20100628261.pdf> (accessed September 3, 2010), 1

<sup>206</sup> Al Abed, "FMO Research Guide: Palestinian Refugees in Jordan," 13.

However, violence does not factor prevalently currently in the camps. The impact of Black September on the camps is examined in the next section.

## **F. POLITICS OF THE PALESTINIANS IN JORDAN**

The politics of the Palestinians in Jordan, including the PLO, began to emerge as a significant factor in the 1970s. Clashes between the PLO and the state from 1967–1971 affected Jordan’s economy. In September 1970, the pro-Palestinian members of the High Council of Jordanian Trade Union Federation called for a strike by all public and private sector employees. The state and the PLO were feuding during this timeframe. The pro-Palestinian members called for a complete disruption of the state.<sup>207</sup> The Palestinians realized their significant clout in Jordan’s economy. They aimed to exercise this clout to further their political agenda. The Palestinians’ actions against Jordan’s economy instead angered the state. This resulted in increased military retaliation. The fighting during this time became known as Black September. The Palestinian position within Jordan was weakened during this period. Additionally, the Jordanian economy suffered immensely. Libya and Kuwait ceased their annual financial support to Jordan. Syria closed its border to Jordan.<sup>208</sup> This period of Palestinian-Jordanian relations exhibits the economic interdependence of the two groups. The Jordanian government saw the need to expand its economy beyond the Palestinians implementing policies to aid East Bankers. The actions of a small faction of Palestinians affected the treatment of all Palestinians. Policies after this period would seek to prop up the East Bankers while restricting the Palestinians. The period does demonstrate that feuding between the groups has political and economic repercussions on a grander scale. Relations between Jordan and its neighbors soured as a result of its treatment of Palestinians.

Jordan operates under a political system that does hold elections for state positions. These elections do not mean that Jordan operates as a democracy. The control

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<sup>207</sup> Adnan Abu-Odeh, “The Battle for Jordan,” in *Jordanians, Palestinians, and the Hashemite Kingdom in the Middle East Peace Process*, Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1999, 181.

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*, 189.

of Jordanian politics lies with the ruling monarchy.<sup>209</sup> Palestinians make up a significant percentage the voters within Jordan. Some Jordanians fear a significant voter turnout of Palestinians would facilitate an unfair representative balance for the Palestinians within the government. In part to combat this fear, a policy of a single vote in multi-member districts has been established. The policy, enacted in 1993, calls for each voter to only cast one vote per election for one candidate despite multiple positions on the candidate list. As recently as the November 2010 election, the Muslim Brotherhood affiliated Islamic Action Front questioned the policy's fairness. Many of in this organization are said to be Palestinians.<sup>210</sup> These individuals question the purpose of the one-person-one-vote policy. The state believes voters will align themselves first with their tribal responsibilities when casting their vote. This would not allow voters to fulfill any ideological agendas for candidates. The state seeks to prevent Islamists from gaining traction in the elections. The law also appears to favor non-Palestinian districts through its re-zoning.<sup>211</sup> The one-person-one-vote policy again demonstrates the state's policies to stifle the Palestinians. The state shows its fear that the Palestinian vote may not support the monarchy. Policies are then enacted to prevent the Palestinians from exercising real political clout.

The Jordanian voting system cannot be ignored in the discussion of politics. The system of voting cards also poses issues in Jordanian politics. In the 1993 elections, claims were made that the method for receiving voter cards and the method for recording illiterate voters' preferences presented possible issues. The election vote casting methods also elicited claims that votes were being sold.<sup>212</sup> Many questions remain around the fairness of the Jordanian electoral system. Despite these issues, elections have occurred in Jordan. The Palestinian right to vote remains a right they do not have in other states. The process of making those votes count needs real improvement. The Jordanian

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<sup>209</sup> Baylouny, *Privatizing Welfare in the Middle East*, 149.

<sup>210</sup> Nisreen el-Shamayiah, "Jordan's Parliament without Opposition," *Al Jazeera*. in <http://blogs.aljazeera.net/middle-east/2010/11/09/jordans-parliament-without-opposition>. (accessed on November 10, 2010), 1.

<sup>211</sup> Robinson, "Defensive Democratization in Jordan," 397.

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*, 398.

government fears a significant Palestinian presence in the government. They continue to enact practices that aid in diminishing the Palestinian presence in Parliament. Despite the ability to vote, the Palestinian citizens of Jordan still remain an outside voice in Jordanian politics. The regime supports this marginalization of Palestinians in politics in order to maintain its current political stronghold.

The international community also expresses concerns over Jordan's political processes. The most recent election raised concerns over a lack of progress in electoral reforms. The parliament of Jordan was dissolved in November 2009 with an assurance that elections would be held in the next year. The monarchy voiced a desire for fair elections after this. However, changes in the electoral districts and a crackdown on protestors mired the validity of the election process. This led to reports of the state seeking to restrict electoral participation.<sup>213</sup> The state continues to exhibit policies that do not demonstrate true political transparency. The current situation appears to benefit the monarchy without true regard for Palestinian representation.

The role of the PLO within Jordan also contributes to how the government treats the Palestinians. The relationship between the PLO and the Jordanian government has evolved significantly since the 1970s. The previously mentioned events of Black September, greatly strained the relationship between the PLO and state. The decision by the Arab League in 1974 to declare the PLO the legitimate negotiator for the Palestinian population reinforced strained relations between the Palestinians and the government. Prior to this declaration, Jordan acted as a significant negotiator for the Palestinian cause. The government of Jordan expressed concerns that their dismissal of negotiating power could create loyalty concerns among the Palestinians residing in Jordan.<sup>214</sup> This rise in the authority of the PLO in the eyes of the international community led in part to the decision by King Hussein in 1988 to release Jordanian authority over the West Bank. The Palestinians in the West Bank now feared their loss of citizenship. They sought the support of the PLO to negotiate on their behalf. The role of the PLO and the Jordanians

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<sup>213</sup> Human Rights Watch, *Jordan: Ensure Free Election Campaign*, October 20, 2010, <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/country,,,JOR,,4cc51c7e1a,0.html> (accessed February 28, 2011), 1.

<sup>214</sup> Brand, "Palestinians and Jordanians: A Crisis of Identity," 53.



in regard to negotiating peace was tested again in 1994 when Jordan and Israel completed peace negotiations. Jordan maneuvered around the PLO to negotiation its own agenda. This action demonstrated that the state's willingness to make policy that would benefit Jordan without regard for the Palestinian position. Again, the authoritarian regime demonstrates its willingness to make policies it deems vital for its own political survival without real regard for Palestinian concerns.

The peace agreement between Jordan and Israel in 1994 illustrates another important political element influencing the treatment of the Palestinians. Following a path set by Egypt, Jordan set to normalize relations with Israel. The agreement between the two states had as much to do with economics as politics. Jordan sought to not become the relocation spot for Palestinian refugees from Lebanon and Syria, if a peace deal was ever reached between Israel and the PLO.<sup>215</sup> Jordan was able to negotiate for its own benefit. In doing so, the Jordanian government showed that they still had a role in the peace process. The Jordanian government showed the PLO that they could still negotiate without them. The Israel-Jordan Peace Treaty enables Jordan to seek normalization of relations on its own terms. The treaty did not make any changes what would benefit the Palestinian population beyond potential economic gain.

As previously mentioned, economics plays a significant role in the politics of Jordan. The IMF reforms of the early 1990s sparked protest by the East Bankers due to a heavier tax burden. This outbreak of protest remarkably had little Palestinian involvement. Previous economic and political policies enacted by the government had fostered a separation between East Bankers and Palestinians. During this time period Jordan did experience some progress in political democratization. The question remains though, were the policy measures really a step towards democratization or a ploy to strengthen the government?<sup>216</sup> Time will tell whether political democratization really progresses any further than the relatively weak changes that have been enacted. The current situation indicates that real democratization has not reached Jordan. Further reforms are necessary in order to see real progress.

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<sup>215</sup> Brand, "Palestinians and Jordanians: A Crisis of Identity," 58.

<sup>216</sup> Robinson, "Defensive Democratization in Jordan," 391.

The monarchy maintains control of Jordanian politics. The government made political parties legal in 1992. The legality of political parties does not prevent issues in electoral politics. The 1992 political law restricts parties from having ties with any outside body organizationally or financially. Some interpret the law as a way to restrict non-monarchy supported parties from entering Jordanian politics. Some in Jordan fear that a Palestinian party could amass too much power, so the hope is that the 1992 law's restrictions on political parties prevents that from occurring. Another aspect of the 1992 election law calls for a future option for Palestinians to select either Jordanian or Palestinian citizenship.<sup>217</sup> The second element of this law shows how the Jordanian government might handle the issue Palestinian integration. Does the state rally behind Palestinians migrating to a future Palestinian state, or do they officially integrate them fully into Jordanian society? This furthered the debate in Jordan. The same questions continually get resurrected during Israeli and Palestinian peace negotiations. It appears that the Jordanian government is hedging its bets to facilitate the Palestinians migration to a future Palestinian state. Until a permanent Palestinian state exists, the government recognizes the political importance of the Palestinians. Policies will continue to influence the amount of participation the Palestinians have in the politics of Jordan as the state sees fit. The government uses the Palestinians for their benefit in order to shore up its political power.

#### **G. THE PLO, ISLAMISTS, AND PALESTINIANS IN JORDAN**

Before delving into the topic of Islamists in Jordan, a general history of the PLO activities in Jordan need to be developed. The PLO emerged as an influential representative for Palestinian people after the 1967 Arab-Israeli conflict. Initially, the PLO and the Jordanian government coordinated due to the PLO basing their actions from Jordan. Adnan Abu-Odeh comments that two events contributed to the preliminary breakdown of the relationship. The first event noted is the February 1968 Israeli military attacks on 13 villages and a refugee camp in Jordan. The Palestinians provoked these attacks from inside Jordan. The results of the Israeli attack into Jordan were significant

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<sup>217</sup> Robinson, "Defensive Democratization in Jordan," 395.

casualties. The Jordanian government held the Palestinians responsible, not the Israeli military. The other event Abu-Odeh notes was the battle at al-Karamah. In March 1968, the Israeli military attacked the refugee camp at al-Karamah. This battle became the biggest military action in the area since the 1967 conflict. The Jordanian army aided the Palestinian activists, which contributed to the Israeli withdrawal.<sup>218</sup> These two events demonstrate the tentative relationship between the Jordanian government and the Palestinian activists. The events led to a feeling of weariness by the Jordanian government of the Palestinian violent actions from inside Jordan. These actions affected all of Jordan, not just the Palestinians. At the same time, the Jordanian government felt a responsibility to aid its Arab comrades in their quest to regain their homeland from Israel. These two conflicting outlooks proved too conflicting to prevent further disillusionment towards the Palestinians by the Jordanian government.

The conflict between the Palestinian activists and the Jordanian government grew with Yasser Arafat becoming the head of the PLO in 1969. Fateh emerged as the primary party in the Palestinian National Convention (PNC). Fateh encouraged Palestinians to create their own social organizations in contrast to the already available Jordanian organizations. The prospect of an emerging consensus among the Palestinians worried the Jordanian government. This led to the monarchy attempting to hinder the strengthening of Palestinian organizations in Jordan.<sup>219</sup> The PLO attempted to create a state within the state supplementing state authority. Increasing tensions between the government and Palestinian activists contributed to a growing divide between the state and the Palestinians. The monarchy maintained the support of the army and tribal base. The Palestinian activists found support in the general population of Palestinians, some professional organizations, and some Jordanian political activists. Despite the increased conflict between the government and the PLO, the average Jordanian and Palestinian supported neither side.<sup>220</sup> The impact of the growing tensions between the state and the PLO cannot be dismissed. The next major event during this time period illustrates that

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<sup>218</sup> Abu-Odeh, "The Battle for Jordan," 170–171.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid., 174–175.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid., 175.

tensions continued. A Palestinian attempted assassination on the king on June 9, 1970. In reaction to the assassination attempt, the army attacked two refugee camps.<sup>221</sup> The violence on both sides demonstrates the precarious relationship between the state and the Palestinians. Events on both sides created an environment of mistrust.

Another set of events around the same time added tension to the Palestinian Jordanian experience. The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP,) began to take airplanes hostage to bring international attention to their cause. The PFLP landed the hijacked planes in Amman, Jordan. The use of Jordan as a landing spot for the hijacked planes resulted in negative publicity for Jordan. The state also reacted negatively to the destruction of the aircraft.<sup>222</sup> These actions by Palestinian activists led to the period known as the Battle of Jordan. The events of this period would eventually lead to the expulsion of the PLO from Jordan.

Black September consists of a ten-month phase between September 1970 and July 1971 with frequent conflicts between the PLO and the Jordanian army. The primary phase raged from September 17–27, 1970. This phase ended with an agreement between the Jordanian government and the PLO in Cairo. The second phase occurred from July 12–17, 1971. This final phase resulted in the PLO's ultimate expulsion from Jordan.<sup>223</sup> The frequent violence seen in Jordan from the end of the 1967 conflict to July 1971 affected the Jordanian and Palestinian relationship. Jordan became the staging ground for the Palestinian resistance. Jordan's citizens felt the profound effect of the escalating violence. Other Arab countries, such as Syria and Libya began to aid the Palestinians. Jordan was already at an economic disadvantage than its Gulf neighbors. The presence of the PLO in Jordan only added to the economic issues. Jordan had to examine its position. The state needed to decide if aiding the Palestinian cause was in the best interest of Jordan as a whole. The Jordanian government chose to force out the PLO and work to rebuild Jordan's economic and political foundation. This marked a turning point in the treatment of the Palestinians. The state began to implement policies that would

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<sup>221</sup> Abu-Odeh, "The Battle for Jordan," 177.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid., 180.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid., 183.

ensure its survival without becoming the Palestinians' state. The authoritarian regime no longer supported the Palestinians' nationalistic aspirations from inside Jordan. The regime did not prescribe to the sweeping sentiment of Arab nationalism. Instead, the regime sought to maintain its authoritarian control of Jordan.

The current discussion on Islamists within Jordan often references the political activities of the Muslim Brotherhood. Palestinians are often considered a significant portion of the Brotherhood's membership. The Muslim Brotherhood offers the opportunity for young Palestinians to join the organization. Through the organization the Palestinians are seen as a member of the Brotherhood first instead of as just a Palestinian.<sup>224</sup> The Muslim Brotherhood has at times enjoyed favor with the Jordanian monarchy. The previously mentioned election law changes in 1993 weakened the Muslim Brotherhood influence.<sup>225</sup> Jordan's Muslim Brotherhood element does remain a part of the political process in Jordan. Due to shifting government favor and laws though, they do not always participate as a party in the election process. The November 2010 election saw their political wing the Islamic Action Front (IAF) call for a boycott of the elections.<sup>226</sup>

The Islamists do hold some sway in Jordanian politics. This can be seen in the results of the 1993 election. As previously mentioned, Jordan enacted the one-person-one-vote policy during this time period. Many would say that the Islamists had poor results in the election. Another analysis is that any results were positive for the Islamists. The policy should have been devastating for the Islamists, but they were able to maintain 22 representatives.<sup>227</sup> The ability of the Islamists to adapt to the new election policy demonstrates their desire to remain part of the Jordanian political landscape. The Muslim Brotherhood appears to fill the void for Palestinians politically. They offer a platform that supports the Palestinian cause without being solely Palestinian.<sup>228</sup> Islamists do not

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<sup>224</sup> Robinson, "Defensive Democratization in Jordan," 400.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid., 397.

<sup>226</sup> Human Rights Watch, *Jordan: Ensure Free Election Campaign*, 2.

<sup>227</sup> Ibid., 397–398.

<sup>228</sup> Robinson, "Defensive Democratization in Jordan," 400.

have the firm hold on Jordanian politics that they do in other Arab states. Their role in politics is still important. Like the PLO before, Islamists appear to be looking for a way to influence the politics in Jordan and be a voice for the Palestinians.

The Islamists in Jordan appear to be broken into two groups: social and political Islamists. Jordanians of East Bank heritage are more likely to fall into the social Islamist category. These Islamists call for social changes such as segregation in schools and stricter bans on alcohol. This group of Islamists associates more closely with the monarchy. The other group of Islamists, the political Islamists, has more a more Palestinian majority. This group rallies behind causes which conflicts with the state's policy. Often this group offers support for Palestinian nationalist causes.<sup>229</sup> Both groups have roles in the politics of Jordan. The Islamists have enjoyed some electoral success despite restrictive state policies. The state continues to repress the actions of the Islamists and the Palestinians. If political reform does occur, can the Islamists capitalize on Palestinian support for their political gain? Resent unrest in the Arab region has contributed to the dialogue on the role of Islamists in reform in the Arab world. While Jordan appears to be safe from sweeping revolution at this time, the possibility for louder calls for reforms by Islamists and the vast Palestinian block remain possible. Until real reform occurs, the Islamists and Palestinians appear to be on the outskirts of significant political process. This is where the regime hopes to keep these factions in order to maintain their authoritarian control over the politics of Jordan.

## **H. IDENTITY OF THE PALESTINIANS IN JORDAN**

The role of identity continues to be source of great debate within Jordan. Palestinians are Jordanian citizens. State policies promoting the division between East Bankers and Palestinians contribute to a divide between the groups. The East Bank First policy of the 1970s called for hiring practices beneficial to East Bankers in the public sector. The East Bank First policy resulted in the Palestinians push to the private sector.

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<sup>229</sup> Robinson, "Defensive Democratization in Jordan," 403.

Policies like this created a rift between the Jordanian and Palestinian populations in their employment in the private and public sector.<sup>230</sup>

Identification of various groups of Palestinians helps to better understand the overall Palestinian identity. Brand discusses four fairly well defined groups of Palestinians in Jordan. The first group is the Palestinians that are camp dwellers. These refugees from either 1948 or 1967 relate strongly to the Palestinian part of their identity despite being Jordanian citizens. The Palestinians with more economic success in the private or public sector make up the next group. This shows less animosity towards the Jordanian government the first group. They still strongly relate to the Palestinian side of their identity. The Palestinians with business and bureaucratic success fall into a third group. These Palestinians demonstrate strong support for the Jordanian regime. This group identifies with the idea that a person can be both Jordanian and Palestinian without a contradiction between the two identities. The final group is least likely to associate as Jordanian. This group is comprised of those who resided in the Gulf States for employment. Many of these Palestinians saw Jordan as simply a place on their passport and not as a homeland they identified with on a personal level. This group identifies strongly with the Palestinian side of their identity.<sup>231</sup> Brand's work on the identity groups among Palestinians shows a lack of a cohesive identity for all Palestinians. A crisis of identity can be seen battling between the people as to whether to identify as Palestinian or Jordanian.

Right of return is important to the discussion on Palestinian identity. Many Palestinians many not desire to return to Mandate Palestine. Maintaining right of return does still remain important for the Palestinians. Palestinians in Jordan seek to maintain this principle despite their Jordanian citizenship. The state needs to maintain a clear policy on Palestinian identity in Jordan. The state continues to support the Palestinians right to return despite its potential to have severe economic repercussion if they loose the Palestinians' economic contribution. The state also appears to support right of return to a future Palestinian state. They do not want Jordan to be proposed as the state for

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<sup>230</sup> Brand, "Palestinians and Jordanians: A Crisis of Identity," 53.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid., 49.

Palestinians from other states to be returned to or integrated into. Israel has at times maintained that Jordan is Palestine. They have stated Palestinians should then be integrated into Jordan. Jordan supports the right of return with the understanding that Jordan is not Palestine. The state supports the Palestinians' cause as long as it does not involve full and permanent integration into Jordanian society.

The Jordanian government policies since 1948 significantly affected the evolving Palestinian identity within Jordan. The policies enacted by the government have sought to ease the Palestinian identity within Jordan at times. The policies have appeared to compel the Palestinians to cling to their separate Palestinian identity in other periods. The complex role of the state in the negotiation process for a Palestinian homeland contributes to this convoluted identity. Prior to the declaration of what is now Israel, the Jordanian monarchy under King Abdullah sought to add what was then Palestine to Jordan. After the 1948 conflict, Jordan took what was available and annexed the West Bank.<sup>232</sup> The idea that Palestinian and Jordanian history is one and the same contributed to policies seeking to clear identity roles. The government set out to establish assured loyalty for the monarchy within the Jordanian side of the population through preferential treatment via state employment.<sup>233</sup> The Jordanian government has attempted to foster a unified identity with campaigns such as the "Jordan First" in the 2000s and the current campaign of "We Are All Jordan."<sup>234</sup>

The policies of the Jordanian government appear to waver between a united Jordan and a divided Jordan at the whim of the state. This wavering adds to calls that the government uses the tension between the Palestinians and Jordanians for its own benefit.<sup>235</sup> The position of the Jordanian government remains a precarious one in which no clear path on identity roles appears evident. The government needs the revenue that the Palestinians bring into Jordan. The Palestinians still independence and recognition making the their identity in Jordan difficult. Jordanians seek recognition also for their

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<sup>232</sup> Brand, "Palestinians and Jordanians: A Crisis of Identity," 52.

<sup>233</sup> Ibid., 48.

<sup>234</sup> Ryan, "We Are All Jordan," 2.

<sup>235</sup> Brand, "Palestinians and Jordanians: A Crisis of Identity," 57.



own history independent of the Palestinian cause. The government must analyze the current political environment when contemplating policies on identity politics in Jordan. They need to decide if they want Palestinians to be Jordanians or remain citizens in name only.

This chapter looked at the major factors that influenced the treatment of Palestinians in Jordan. All the factors appear to offer some impact on the treatment of Palestinians. The research shows that the primary factor affecting the treatment of Palestinians in Jordan is economics. The Palestinians form such a significant portion of the overall Jordanian population. Their sheer economic impact cannot be discredited. The political interaction between the Palestinians and the Jordanian government factors significantly into the treatment of Palestinians as well. The interaction between the economics and politics of the situation is what often truly impacts the treatment of the Palestinians. Palestinians in Jordan enjoy more rights than those in other UNRWA states. These rights have been legally given to them, but their actual implementation varies drastically based on the situation. Jordan gives these rights in part to maintain its own economic health. There is a tough balance in Jordan between granting the Palestinians more rights and keeping the Jordanian population content. The authoritarian regime favors the factions can preserve their political livelihood. Economic and politics remain more important than rights to the Palestinians. The regime treats the Palestinians in a manner that maintains the status quo. They do not allow for policies that could undermine their political survival. Jordan remains under authoritarian control that seeks to minimize the Palestinian's ability to fully integrate into society.

## V. CONCLUSION

Multiple conflicts, numerous internationally supported resolutions, and some attempts to negotiate a peaceful solution frame the topic of Palestinian refugee treatment in Lebanon, Syria and Jordan. Each case study presented a basic overview of the historical background for the Palestinian refugee migration to the state. The same major factors were evaluated for each case study. The first factor developed was the legal framework, including any laws on employment, education, property ownership, and citizenship. The economics situation for each state was examined next to determine its role in the treatment of the Palestinians. The space within each state was subsequently discussed. Then the next major factor of the political situation for each state was discussed. The role of the PLO and Islamist organizations built off of the political discussion. The final factor presented was the role of identity on the treatment of the Palestinians. Through the analysis of the factors influencing the treatment of Palestinians in the Levant, economics and politics emerged as the principal factors affecting the treatment the Palestinians. The level of influence these two factors had in each state differed slightly. Despite the dramatically different cases, though, the same two factors emerged as the most relevant in the explanation of the treatment given to the Palestinians.

The three cases offer strikingly different approaches towards treatment of Palestinians by the state. While the research indicated that all three states' primary reasoning for their treatment may have been based on the same two factors of economics and politics, each state presented a varied path for reaching its level of Palestinian integration. The first case of Lebanon presented the strictest restrictions for Palestinian integration into society. Syria chose a path of some integration of Palestinians without full citizenship rights. Finally, Jordan presented the easiest path for Palestinian integration. The integration in Jordan does appear to be more symbolic than actual. Despite three distinct spectrums of integration, the same two factors emerged for all cases when determining what controls the treatment of Palestinians.

## **A. LEGAL STATUS OF THE PALESTINIANS**

The legal status of the Palestinians differs significantly between the three cases. Lebanon offers the fewest civic rights to their Palestinian refugee population. Naturalization of the Palestinians remains a hot-button issue in Lebanon. For now, Palestinians mostly are unable to obtain Lebanese citizenship. Palestinians in Lebanon cannot own property, and they are confined to sub-standard conditions in the camps. Syria's legal policies towards the Palestinians offer more rights than Lebanon. Palestinians are still not eligible for citizenship in Syria. However, aside from citizenship, Syria offer basic rights similar to those of its citizens. Palestinians can own property, attend schools, and seek healthcare along with the rest of the Syrian population. In Jordan, Palestinians have the same rights as citizens, since they are eligible for citizenship. Palestinians have legally been given methods to integrate.

While all three states offer some basic rights to the Palestinians, the Palestinians in Lebanon face the toughest legal roadblocks to integration. The Lebanese state fears that an integration of the Palestinians could disrupt the confessional balance of Lebanese politics. The deeply divided nature of the Lebanese population does not make the restriction of Palestinians appear so unusual. Syria maintains a middle of the road approach that gives their Palestinian refugee population rights without granting them the major right of citizenship. The Syrian regime is able to pacify its Palestinian population enough to prevent any political action that could be detrimental to the Alawi elite. Jordan has legally given the Palestinians the most rights of all the Levant states. The granting of rights to the Palestinians in Jordan has not meant full integration has occurred in Jordan. Instead the regime appears to favor granting rights to the Palestinians in order prevent political unrest that could upset its authoritarian hold. The factor of legal status of the Palestinians in each state demonstrates the willingness of each government to integrate their Palestinian population. All three states dole out legal rights to their Palestinian populations on a level that minimizes Palestinian involvement into society. The political elite in all three cases uses legal statutes to maintain their political livelihood.

## **B. ECONOMICS OF THE PALESTINIANS**

The factor of economics heavily influences the treatment of the Palestinians in all three cases. This factor emerges as vital to the treatment of the Palestinian refugees in the Levant more than any other factor. Lebanon's confessional make-up spurs its economic policies. The restriction on the primarily Sunni Palestinian population from fully entering the workforce allows the precarious confessional balance to remain intact. Restrictions in education and work permits allow for the Palestinians in Lebanon to remain marginalized in the economics of Lebanon. Some Lebanese fear that the already bleak economic outlook of Lebanon will be worsened with an influx of Palestinian workers. Strides are being made to lessen the restrictions on Palestinians in the Lebanese workforce, but restrictions still occur in certain professions like medicine and law despite changes in employment laws. Syria allows Palestinians to work openly in its work force with out needing work permits. Economic downturns have affected Syria's overall economy. Palestinians make up a relatively small portion of Syria's population, so their overall economic affect is negligible. The presence of a Palestinian population does have an economic impact on the economy of Syria though. Jordan needs the Palestinian population the most economically. The significant number of Palestinians in Jordan makes their economic performance imperative to Jordan's economic success. Due to a lack of natural resources or robust industry, Jordan continues to struggle economically. The loss of the Palestinians' economic input would be detrimental to the Jordanian economy. Jordan has opened up economic ties with Israel and the West through peace negotiations and international economic alliances. These economic alliances would be impossible if Jordan further marginalized its Palestinian population. Jordan comprehends the importance of evenhanded treatment of their Palestinians population for its economic survival. All three cases demonstrated the importance of economics in the treatment of the Palestinians. Each state handles economic integration in varying manners. Each state realizes the significance of Palestinians on the economics. The economic policies in all three cases are put in place to maintain the political survival of the leaders in power. Each state integrates the Palestinians economically in a manner that will shore up

domestic political support. The analysis shows that economics emerges as one of the more weighty factors in determining the treatment of Palestinians in the Levant.

### **C. SPACE WITHIN THE STATE AND THE PALESTINIANS**

Space within the state is an issue that varies considerably between the three cases. The size of the state does not factor into the space issue as profoundly as the population make-up of the state. Lebanon has space to integrate the Palestinians into their state. Instead of integration, Lebanon confines its refugee population to camps. The restriction of the Palestinians to camps preserves the shaky population balance among the Lebanese state. This restriction of refugees to camps seeks to contain violence to the camps. Despite this goal, repeated acts of violence occur outside the camps among the general population. Syria allows its refugee population to reside outside camps. The camps in Syria house a relatively small portion of the overall refugee population, but the camps remain a source of basic services for the Palestinians. Large growth of the refugee population beyond the Palestinians has made space within the state a larger issue. This issue, however, centers on the growing Iraqi refugee population more than the Palestinians. Jordan also permits refugees to reside outside the camps. As previously mentioned, the Palestinian refugee population in Jordan is substantial. Jordan has the space to accommodate the Palestinians. The capital city of Jordan remains crowded due to many moving from rural areas to the city. In general, space within the state appears to be a more negligible factor in the treatment of the Palestinians in the Levant.

### **D. CAMP SECURITY AND THE PALESTINIANS**

Camp security stands as another factor in the treatment of Palestinians in the Levant. Lebanon struggles with the issue of camp security. Camp security can be difficult to analyze. In order gauge camp security, a determination of whether violence from the camps originated from the general camp population or a militant minority is necessary. The Lebanese state appears unwilling to differentiate between a minority seeking violence, and the will of overall Palestinian population in the camps. Too often, the actions of a few reflect poorly on the entire refugee population. The issue of camp

security remains relatively immaterial in the overall analysis of Palestinian refugee treatment in Syria. Camps house a minority of the Palestinians in Syria. Syria has been able to prevent widespread violence from infiltrating the camps. Jordan's history with camp security offers many instances of violence. The actions of violence in the 1970s in the camps facilitated a crackdown in the camps. Like Syria, Jordan does not restrict the Palestinians to camps. The ability of Palestinians in Jordan to live outside the camps has prevented widespread violence from emerging in the camps in recent times. Camp security remains a relevant factor in analyzing the treatment of Palestinians in the Levant, but appears to impact the Lebanese treatment of the Palestinians most. Previous issues with camp security in Jordan accounted for the treatment of their Palestinian population in the 1970s and 1980s, but are less critical in accounting for current treatment of Palestinians.

#### **E. POLITICS OF THE PALESTINIANS**

Politics emerged as a critical factor in all three cases. The three cases have varying political systems. The Lebanese confessional political system leads to frequent political turmoil. The Maronites fear that any political rights to the Palestinians would aid the Sunni cause. Palestinians in Lebanon cannot vote. They must seek Lebanese representatives to advocate for their cause. The politics of the situation can also be seen in Hezbollah's advocacy of more rights for the Palestinians. Even though the Palestinians do not vote, they factor into the politics of Lebanon. The Syrian political system centers on the Alawi elite. The Alawi minority rules the politics of Syria. The Palestinians in Syria also cannot vote. Like in Lebanon, they must seek representatives to advocate for them. The Syrian state has allowed for Palestinians to enter into Ba'ath organizations. The state makes continued claims that they fully support the Palestinian national movement. They seek to work with their ally Iran to aid the Palestinian cause. Still, Palestinians are marginalized politically in Syria, with no rights to participate in the electoral process. It can be argued though that even if they had this right it would not matter due to the authoritarian nature of the state. Politics also heavily affects the treatment of Palestinians in Jordan. Unlike in Lebanon and Syria, Palestinians in Jordan

can vote. The electoral process in Jordan does appear to discriminate against Palestinian voters. The one vote policy prevents Palestinians from making significant gains in Jordanian politics. The state policies in Jordan seek to minimize the Palestinians role in politics. These restrictive actions are enacted to maintain state control over politics. The government fears too much Palestinian representation would disrupt the political balance. Real political reforms do not appear to be occurring in Jordan. Political policies are made to support East Bankers over Palestinians. All three states use the Palestinian cause for their political gain when necessary. The Palestinians are a popular cause to rally around when politically beneficial. None of the three states demonstrate a real concern for the Palestinian cause. The Palestinians appear to remain on a path of political marginalization in all three states unless real political reforms occur. The support of the Palestinian cause comes from little real empathy for the Palestinian cause, but instead a desire to maintain political power. This desire for the repressive regimes to maintain power is the real factor that affects the treatment of the Palestinians in the Levant. Ultimately, the governments in place seek to maintain their current level of power and often do so at the expense of the Palestinians.

#### **F. THE PLO, ISLAMISTS, AND PALESTINIANS**

The PLO and Islamists organizations affect the Palestinian situation in each state. In Lebanon, the PLO's relationship with the state has been problematic. The PLO based its operations in Lebanon after being expelled from Jordan. The PLO established a state within the state in Lebanon that led to conflicts with the government. After much turmoil, the PLO was expelled from Lebanon leaving a void in Palestinian representation. Islamist organization Hezbollah has filled this void to some extent. They serves as a vital faction in Lebanese politics. Hezbollah advocates for the Palestinian cause. Hezbollah also offers services to the refugee community. They currently enjoy political favor in Lebanon. They support more rights for Palestinians. In Syria, the PLO and the state have had periods of tension and periods of collaboration. The Syrians aided the PLO cause during Black September. In Lebanon, the Syrians used the violent turmoil between the PLO and the state to gain a political foothold. The PLO and Syria also do not agree

on peace negotiations with Israel. The Syrians ally themselves with Iran and Hezbollah. They maintain that they fully support the Palestinian cause; however, the Syrians have claimed that the Palestinian negotiators are willing to make too many concessions. Islamist organizations in Syria have not gained a significant political foothold. The Alawi seek to maintain their power. They have aided Hezbollah, but inside Syria the state has sought to minimize the impact of Islamist organizations like the Muslim Brotherhood that rival their Ba'ath party. Jordan too has had a complex relationship with the PLO. The PLO was expelled from Jordan after Black September. Jordan also opposed the PLO being named the sole negotiator on the Palestinians behalf. Prior to this, Jordan had been a significant negotiator for the Palestinians. Like Syria, Jordan's government seeks to minimize the role of Islamist organizations in the political process. Islamists have enjoyed some political success in Jordan. Electoral laws have sought to diminish that role though in order to maintain the current governmental control. Palestinians are able to join the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan where they can have an identity beyond that of Palestinian. All three cases show that the PLO relationship with the state affects the treatment of the Palestinians. The involvement of Islamists actively advocating for the Palestinians varies. This factor does influence the treatment of Palestinians in each case, but the levels vary from case to case. This factor's impact can be seen most profoundly when examined in light of the political situation in each state. This factor contributes to the overall political situation in each state, but alone the factor does not explain the disparity of treatment of the Palestinians.

## **G. IDENTITY OF THE PALESTINIANS**

Identity was the final factor presented for analysis of treatment of Palestinians in the Levant. Each case handled Palestinian identity differently. Lebanon clearly separated the Palestinian and Lebanese identities. The policies of the state facilitated the Palestinians keeping a very distinct separate identity from their hosts. Clinging to Palestinian identity can be seen in the camps that mirror their villages in Palestine. The Lebanese state operates with distinct identities for all its people groups. The Palestinians are clearly not part of an overall Lebanese identity. In Syria, the state has made some effort to integrate the Palestinians. The state has maintained that the Palestinians do have



their own separate identity. The state, however, has not encouraged a strong Palestinian resistance organization inside Syria. The Palestinians have a separate identity in Syria. However, the distinction between their citizens and the Palestinians is not as profound in other states. Jordan presents the most complex case for identity. Identity heavily shapes the treatment of Palestinians in Jordan. Many policies in Jordan have addressed identity. The state has taken two paths on identity formation. The state has at times encouraged very separate East Bank and Palestinian identities. Jordanians emphasize that they have a separate history outside of Palestinian relations. Some inside the state uphold that being Palestinian and Jordanian is not the same. Identity is a threat to the state most in Jordan. The Palestinians may be treated the best in Jordan, but they are still severely underrepresented political. The state seeks to undermine the separate Palestinian identity and does this by enforcing little political representation that could change the identity politics. In all three cases, right of return affects the Palestinian identity. Palestinians in all states defend their right to return to a future Palestinian state. Right of return is a principle factor in identity formation for the Palestinians. While identity formation does factor into the treatment of the Palestinians, this factor only partial explains the treatment the Palestinians receive. This factor appears to be more of an influence on the Palestinians themselves than the states that dictate their treatment.

The research conducted in this thesis indicates that the economic situation appears to affect the treatment of Palestinian refugees in the Levant most profoundly. The role of the Palestinians in the economics of each state varies based on the economic needs of each state. No matter the role, the state cannot discount the Palestinians economic impact if they seek to maintain political power. The political impact of the Palestinian situation also rises in all three case studies as the other major factor influencing the treatment of the Palestinian refugee population. Each state grants Palestinians refugee rights to further its own political agenda. Lebanon seeks to maintain its confessional balance. In order to do so, the state remains unwilling to truly integrate the Palestinians. In Syria, the Alawi political elite attempt to uphold their political power as well. The authoritarian regime of Syria has allowed enough integration of the Palestinians to prevent them from being a political force inside Syria. The Alawi seek to minimize the possibility of an alliance

forming between the Sunni majority and the Palestinians. The state does this championing the Palestinian cause in the international community and giving them enough rights in Syria to remain content. All of this is done not out of compassion for the Palestinians, but instead out of the desire to remain politically in control. The Jordanian authoritarian political regime also seeks to handle the Palestinians in a manner that will benefit them politically. The state grants enough rights to the Palestinians to allow them to be an economic force for Jordan. However, the Palestinians are given only enough political freedom to allow them a minute level of participation without jeopardizing the monarchy's political clout. The monarchy never fully prescribed to Arab nationalism. Jordan integrated the Palestinians enough for their own economic and political gain without really aiding the greater Palestinian cause. Ultimately, all three states have integrated the Palestinians enough to benefit the state economically and politically without disrupting the general structure of the state. In addition, a final solution in the larger issue of an independent Palestinian homeland has not been settled. Until a final solution to the bigger issue of a homeland for the stateless Palestinians is solved, the economics and politics of the UNRWA sponsored states will continue to influence the treatment of Palestinian refugees in the Levant. An ongoing disparity in the treatment between each state will only continue, until a lasting solution can be arranged. The only other option to improve the treatment of Palestinians is for the states to get serious about affording the Palestinians rights on par with that of its own citizens.

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